

TRUE STORIES
FOR
LITTLE PEOPLE
FROM THE BOOK

Mrs. E. J. Richmond

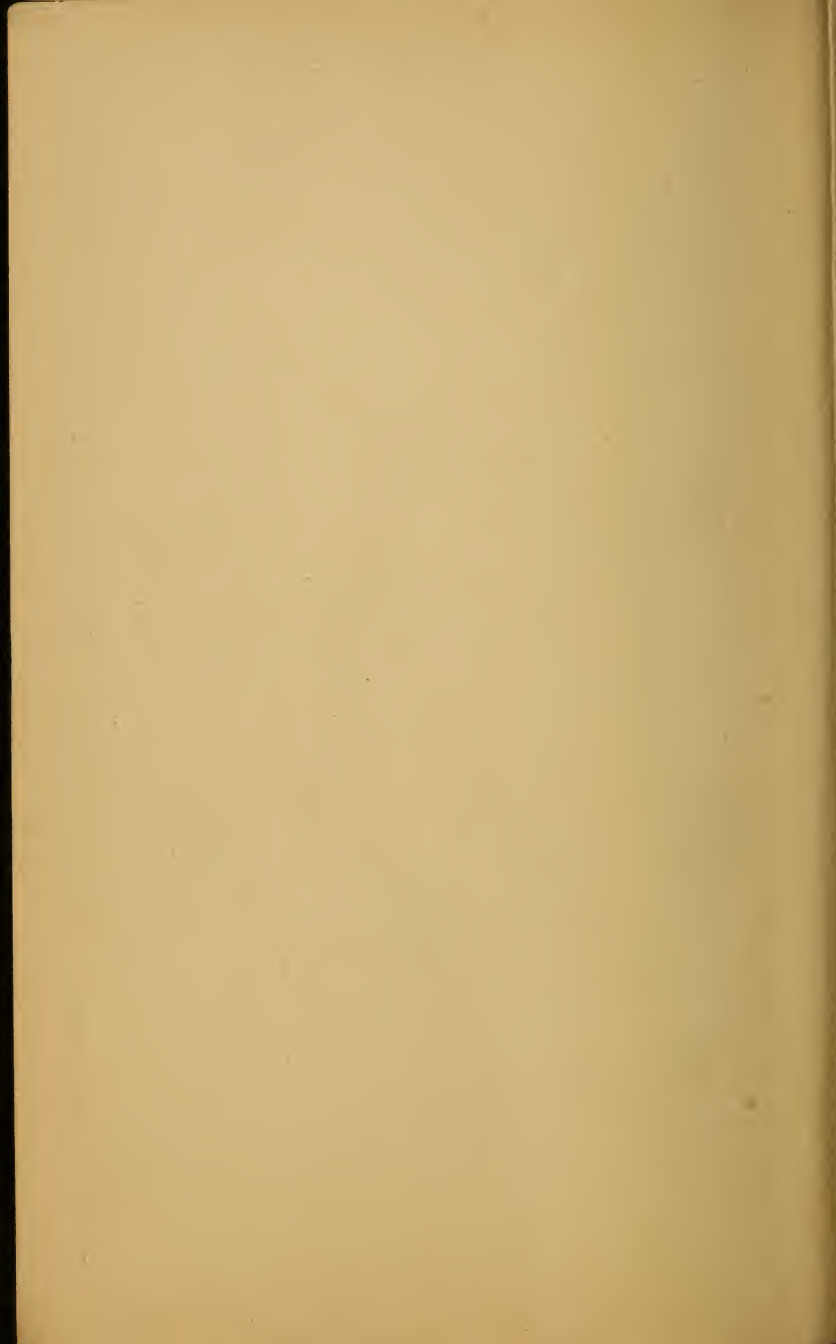
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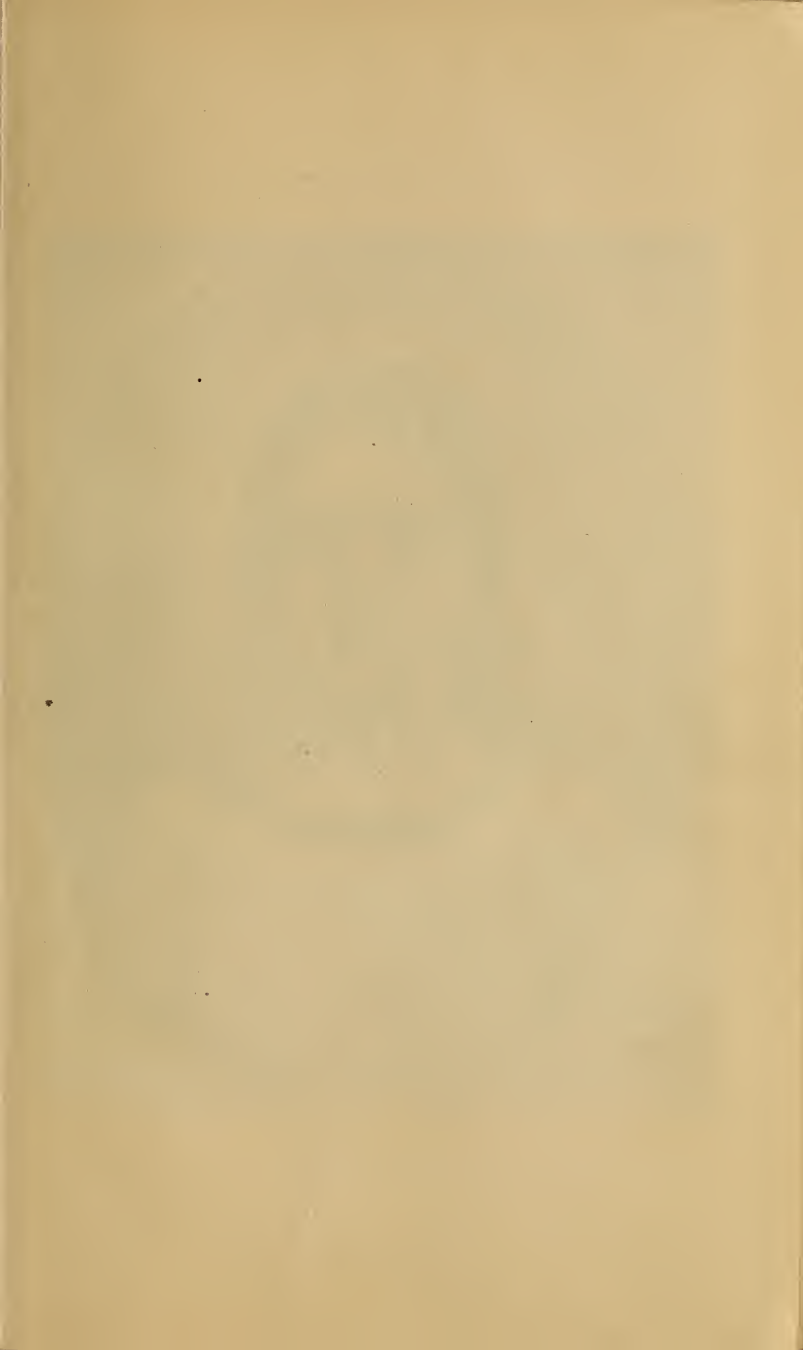
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TRUE STORIES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

FROM THE BOOK

BY

MRS. E. J. RICHMOND

AUTHOR OF "THE WORLD'S WOMEN," "DRIFTING AND ANCHORED,"
"THE TWO PATHS," "AUNT CHLOE AND HER YOUNG
FRIENDS," "HOPE RAYMOND," "SCRIP-
TURE PRIMER," ETC.



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PREFACE.

ONE of the world's great writers, lying on his death-bed, said to his servant, —

“Bring me the Book.”

“What Book?” said the servant, thinking of the many beautiful books his master had written.

“The Bible,” said Sir Walter. “There is but one Book.”

To seek to interest my young friends in the study of this “one Book,” is the aim of the writer of the following sketches drawn from its treasury.

MRS. E. J. RICHMOND.

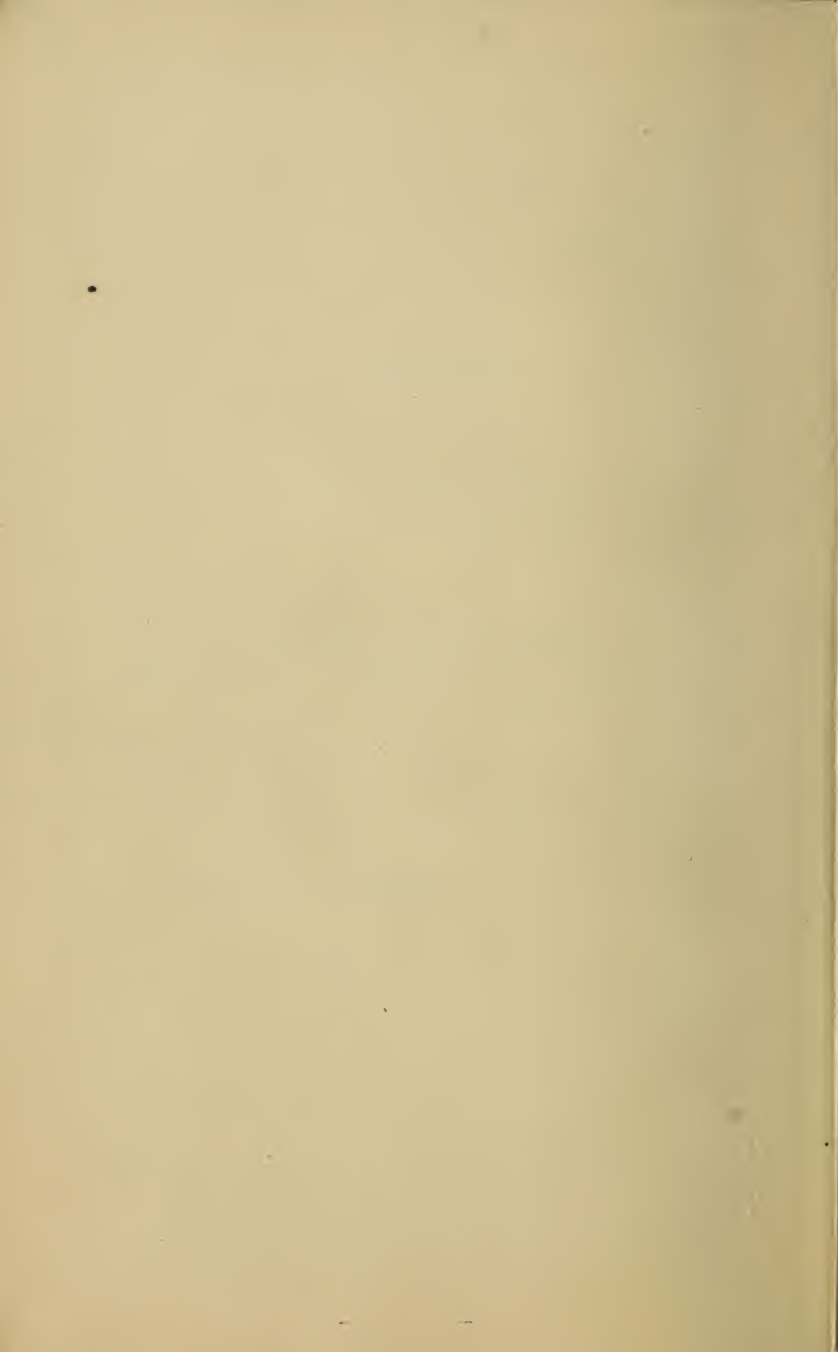


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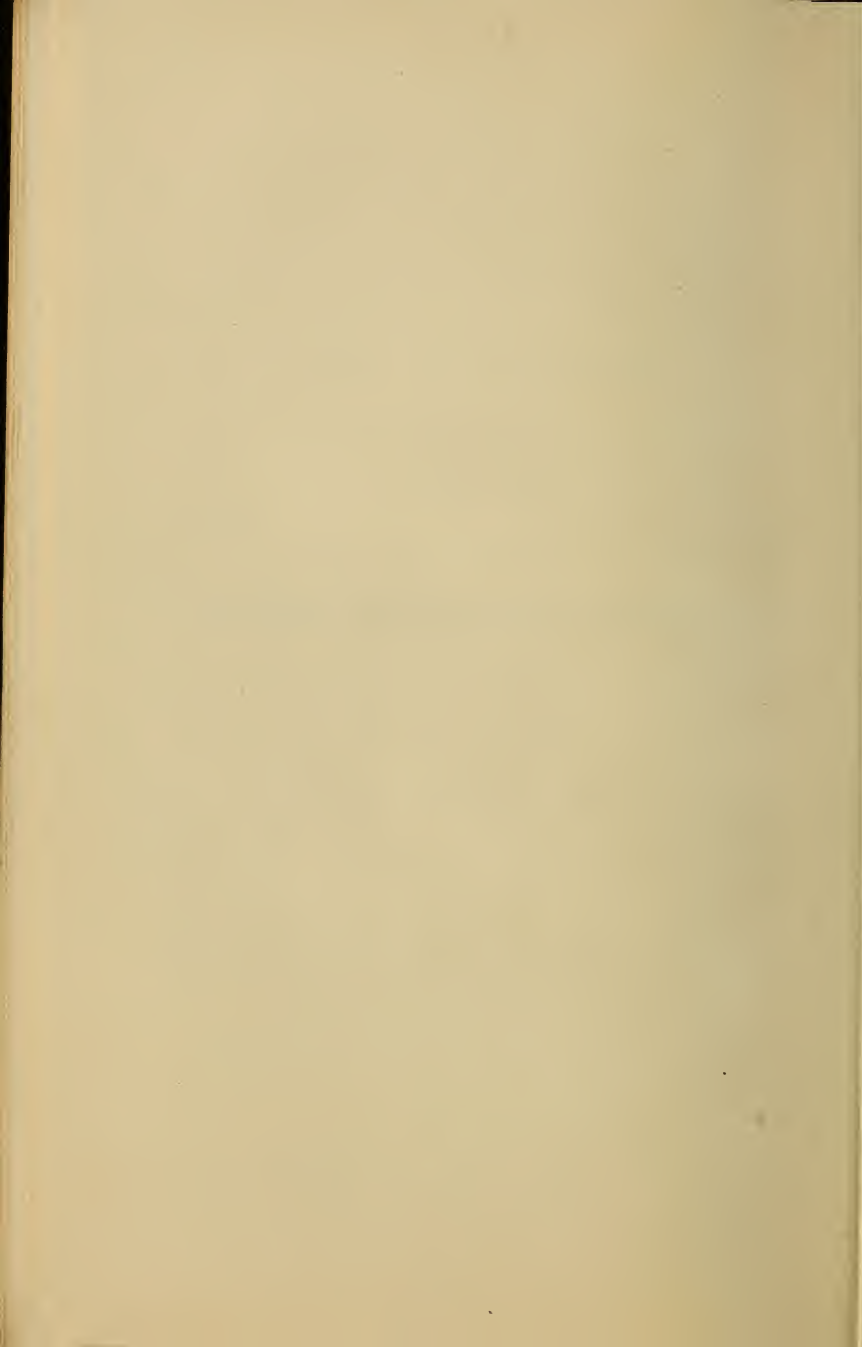
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TRUE STORIES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.

PART I.



TRUE STORIES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE FROM THE BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

THE GARDEN.

THERE are many lovely gardens in this fair world of ours, but I suppose none was ever so fair and perfect as the garden of Eden. The great and good God, the Creator of all things, fitted it up for the home of the first man and woman—Adam and Eve, and we may believe it was beautiful indeed. God had made the world, and the living creatures which inhabit it, the beasts, the fishes and the birds, and “saw that it was good.” But He did what was greater than all these. He said “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over all.”

“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.

This was the happy pair whom God placed in the garden of Eden.

Such fruits and flowers, such beautiful foliage and musical streams, so much that "God saw was good," and Adam and Eve had only "to dress it, and to keep it." How happy they must have been; for sin was yet unknown. God gave them leave to eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden, save one. Of this one tree, the "tree of knowledge," He forbade them to taste; for, He said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

These happy people who lived in the garden of Eden, had one awful power, the same, kind reader which you and I possess to-day, *the power of choice*. I suppose that Satan, the great enemy of God, knew this. He hated God and His creatures as much as God loved them, and he resolved to destroy these innocent people if he could. So he took the form of a serpent and said to Eve as she was enjoying her lovely home :

"Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Oh if Eve had only known what a deadly enemy it was who spoke to her! but she answered :

“We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die.” Then the wicked serpent said “Ye shall not surely die.” Why did not the poor woman turn away from the false wicked tempter at once? But *she listened*. And the cruel tempter said, “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.”

Even now poor Eve did not turn away. To know! to be so grandly wise, she who knew so little! This was her first temptation and she fell. She forgot her best Friend. It was all before her, right and wrong, good and evil, to obey or to disobey, and *she must choose*. Alas! alas! She reached out her hand, and plucked and ate the fruit which God had forbidden her to touch or to taste. And thus sin came into the world, and “the wages of sin is death.”

“The garden was so sweet and fair
Until the tempter entered there,
And hapless Eve forgot her Lord
And listened to the flattering word

Of the great enemy. Alas!
That such a thing should come to pass;
That Eve's fair hand should usher in
Cold cruel death, the wage of sin."

When Adam knew the great wrong which Eve had done, he too ate of the fruit which she gave to him. And now the punishment began.

The heavy load of sin was on their hearts, and when "in the cool of the day," they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden, they *tried to hide away*, instead of running to meet Him, as they had done. *To hide from God*. Every child knows that there is no place in the wide world where *that* can be done. God knew all about it, but He called, "Adam, where art thou?" Then Adam told Him that he was afraid when he heard the voice of God and went and hid himself. Sin alone makes men afraid of the good God.

The Lord said to him, "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" Adam was not brave. He said "The woman *whom Thou gavest me*, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." And the Lord said to Eve "What is this that thou hast done?" And she

was not brave. She answered "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat." Then the Lord cursed the serpent which had tempted Eve, and all people hate the serpent up to this day.

Adam and Eve were driven from the beautiful garden and forced to till the ground. And God cursed the ground because of sin, and it brought forth thorns and thistles. And he told Adam that because he had done this great wrong, he should die at last, and be buried in the ground, for he said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

This was the beginning of the sorrow which sin brought into the world.

QUESTIONS.

Who prepared the garden of Eden?

For whom was it prepared?

Was it a pleasant home?

Of how many of the fruits of the garden might they eat?

Of how many were they forbidden to taste?

What was the penalty if they should disobey?

- What awful power did Adam and Eve possess?
Who first disobeyed?
Who tempted her?
What did Satan tell her?
Who next disobeyed?
When they heard the Lord's voice in the garden
what did they try to do?
Could they hide away from Him?
What excuse did Adam make?
What was Eve's excuse?
What sentence was pronounced against them?

CHAPTER II.

THE BROTHERS.

“DRIVEN from Eden, and for my sin.” This bitter thought must have been in Eve’s heart every day that she lived. She saw Adam toiling wearily, the sweat drops on his brow, to keep back the “briars and thorns,” and to raise the fruits which had grown in the garden ready for their use. And she no longer heard the voice of her best Friend. But He did not forget her; He sent to the sad home two sons, Cain and Abel, and again they were happy. The love of father, and mother, brother, sister and home, is sweeter than all else in the whole world. It is next to the love of God.

Adam and Eve told these dear boys of this great and good Being, who made all things, and taught them to worship Him. He taught them too, to cultivate the soil, and to care for living creatures. Cain chose to be a farmer, but Abel was “a

keeper of sheep." Both were honorable callings, but God who knows the hearts of men, saw that Cain was a very wicked man. Abel was pure and true and loved and revered God.

The two brothers made offerings to God. Cain laid the fruits of the earth upon the altar which he made, and Abel upon his altar offered a lamb. And God, who knew the hearts of both the brothers, accepted the lamb which Abel gave, but did not have "respect to Cain's gift." Then Cain was very angry. Here we see sin again; first envy, then anger, then the blackest of sins. For cruel Cain killed his true good brother.

God spake to the wicked man and said, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Now Cain adds falsehood to all his sins, and says, "I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" Then Cain, the first murderer, was driven forth with a brand upon his brow, "a fugitive and a vagabond;" and he said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." To live under such a load of guilt must have been an awful punishment. The curse of God rested upon him till he died, and all over the world to-day he is known as "the murderer Cain," while his brother



THE MURDER OF ABEL.

is remembered as "righteous Abel." Thus men live thousands of years after they are dead and are "only remembered by what they have done."

QUESTIONS.

WHAT was Eve's great sorrow when they had been driven from the garden?

Did God forget her?

What were the names of the sons He sent her?

What is one of the sweetest things in the world?

What did Adam teach these boys?

Were the boys alike?

What were their occupations?

What offerings did they make to God?

Which did God accept, and why?

Why was Cain so angry?

What evil things came into his heart?

What did he do?

What answer did he make to God when He asked for his brother?

What doom was pronounced against him?

How are people remembered?

CHAPTER III.

A SHORT STORY OF A LONG LIFE.

It is all summed up in twelve words, the story of a man who lived the noblest life it is possible for a man to live in this world. "And Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him."

This was the whole story, but the life lasted three hundred and sixty-five years. It was a grand thing to walk with God, but Enoch did not do it *because others did*. The Bible had not been written, and Christ had not yet come. All around him, men who had the same light he had—*the voice of God* in the soul, chose evil instead of good, wrong instead of right, but Enoch was wise. He "walked with God and was not, for God took him." He was translated. He did not go through the gates of death, as each one of us must do, as Christ himself did.

None of us may follow him in this, but every one may copy his grand life : may walk with God.

Then we have not only life eternal, but "all things" in this life.

" Each day to walk and talk with God,
Each day to heed His gentle voice,
This is the only happy life,
Thus may we 'evermore rejoice.'
For all of earth and all of heaven
He has unto His chosen given."

QUESTIONS.

WHAT was the name of a good man whose long life is summed up in twelve words?

How many years did he live?

Did Enoch have the Bible?

Was he surrounded with good people?

What light had Enoch?

Had the people around him the same light?

What did they choose?

What is said of Enoch?

What came to him?

May we have to follow him in this?

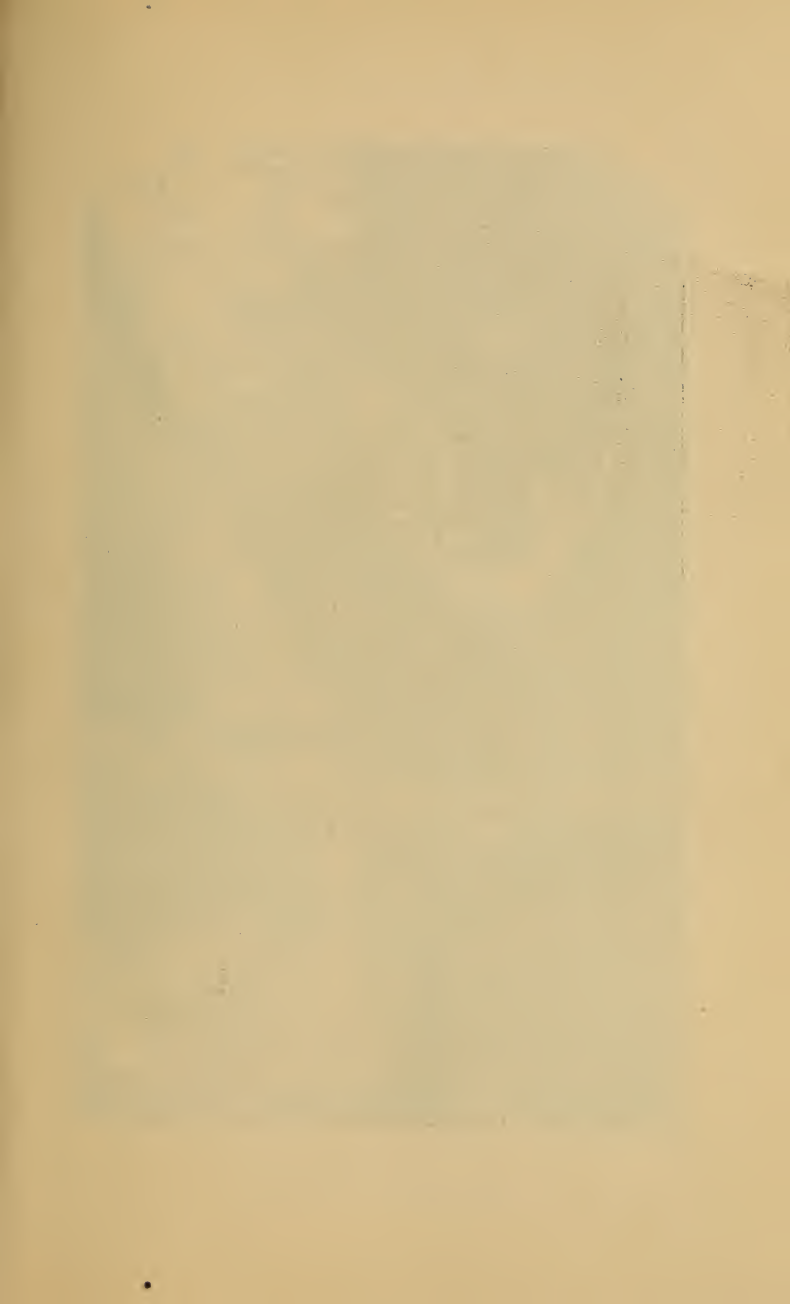
What may we do?

CHAPTER IV.

THE FLOOD.

WATER is one of the greatest blessings which God has given to man. Yet God used it to destroy men, because they loved sin. Liberty — the power to choose — is a great blessing, but we may abuse it as Eve did. And men did abuse it. They loved sin, and the world grew wickeder every day.

There was only one man, Noah, who believed God and obeyed Him. And when God had determined to destroy all men for their great sins, He told Noah, and bade him build an ark. It was a great ship, larger than any ever builded, perhaps. Yet it is said that the "Great Eastern," which some years ago laid the Atlantic cable, was of about the same length and breadth as the ark. To see a great ship like this going up year after year, and to hear Noah tell that God was about to





THE DOVE RETURNING.

bring a flood upon the earth, and destroy all flesh, was too much for the faithless people.

The ark stood on dry land, and no doubt they thought it would always be there. But when they saw all the animals, two of a kind, going into the great three-storied ark, and knew that Noah had laid up in it food enough of all kinds to last many months, they began to look grave. Then God said to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." And Noah obeyed, and with his wife, his three sons and their wives, went into the ark. "*And the Lord shut him in.*" Now they are safe, and no doubt the men who had sneered at Noah began to tremble. For the rain came down, and the ark rose on the waters. Men fled to the hills and the mountains.

The rain still poured for forty days and forty nights, and the mountains were covered. And every living thing upon the earth, except what were in the ark, was dead. Then God remembered them, and the rain ceased, and the winds blew, and the tops of the mountains appeared.

The ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, and

Noah opened the window, and sent forth, first a raven which did not come back, and then a dove which "found no rest for the sole of her foot," and came back to him in the ark. He waited seven days and sent her forth again, and this time she came back with an olive leaf in her mouth. Then Noah knew that the waters were abated. We may think how glad they all were, after living in the ship one hundred and fifty days with only water, water everywhere, to see the earth again.

God had called him into the ark; now he says, "Go forth." And Noah went out with every living creature. He stood on the dear old earth again, and the very first thing which he did shows Him to have been a true, good man. "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord." He offered sacrifice, and the Lord was pleased. He made to Him this great promise: "I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake; . . . seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." For "the token of the covenant" He gave the beautiful rainbow, and every time we look upon it, we think of God, and of His great goodness to us.

It is very sad to know that Noah was the first man to learn that "wine is a mocker." He planted a vineyard. The juice of the grape is very sweet and nourishing before it begins to spoil. Then, when fermentation begins, alcohol, like the serpent in the garden, makes it what the wise man speaks of: "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? . . . Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine. . . . At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." We may believe that when Noah drank so freely of the wine, he did not know that it was spoiled. But *it bit him all the same*. All the world knows his shame. The Book tells all the sins and mistakes of good men just as faithfully as it does their virtues. And so other poor men who have fallen into sin do not despair. They remember how patient and long-suffering God is, and that men have only to confess and turn away from sin, to find mercy.

QUESTIONS.

What is one of the greatest blessings God has given to man ?

Why did He turn this blessing to a curse ?

What did the people choose ?

How many men believed and obeyed God ?

What was that man's name ?

What did God tell Noah to do ?

What great ship of modern times bore the same proportions ?

Did Noah warn the people ?

Did they heed his warnings ?

What caused them to look grave ?

What did God say to Noah ?

What did He then do ?

How long did the rain come down ?

What happened to every living thing outside the ark ?

When the rain ceased, where did the ark rest ?

What did Noah do ?

How long was he in the ark ?

What did God now say to Noah ?

When Noah and his family went forth from the ark, what was his first act?

What beautiful token did God appoint of His promise not again to drown the earth?

After this what great mistake did Noah make?

Does the Bible tell us of the faults as well as the virtues of men?

CHAPTER V.

THE HIGH TOWER.

As the earth became peopled again, and all the people spoke one language, they forgot the Lord, who had preserved their fathers in the great flood. They said they would build a great city, and a tower, the top of which should reach heaven. They would make them a name, and not go wandering over the earth. And they builded well. The brick which they used was burned thoroughly; and there were so many of them speaking one language, the way seemed clear to do all they planned.

But God who made them planned otherwise. In the midst of their busy work, He said that He would confound their language, so that no one could understand what the other said. This He did, and the men who had made such great plans without asking God were in sore trouble.

They left off building the city, and the high tower, and were scattered throughout the earth, as God had planned.

And they called the city which was not builded, Babel, because that the Lord did there confound the language of all the people, and scatter them abroad over the earth.

QUESTIONS.

As the earth became peopled again, did men remember God ?

What did they plan to do ?

Why ?

Did they build well ?

Why did they succeed so well ?

What was God's plan ?

What did He do ?

What happened then ?

What name did they give the city ?

CHAPTER VI.

THE DOOMED CITIES.

AMONG the few righteous men of which the Bible speaks is Abraham, who is called "the friend of God." He sent angels to this good man, to tell him what He was about to do.

Among all the wicked cities in the world, none were so utterly bad as Sodom and Gomorrah. They were situated in the midst of a beautiful plain, which Lot, the nephew of Abraham, had chosen as his home. He was a good man; but he lived in Sodom, and a good man cannot live in a vile place without being harmed.

God sent His angels to tell Abraham that He was about to destroy the wicked cities. Abraham thought of Lot, and prayed that if fifty righteous men could be found in Sodom, it might be spared. And God said that if He found fifty good men there, He would spare the city.

Then Abraham pleaded for mercy if forty should be found. And God said that He would not destroy the city for forty's sake. Abraham now asked for mercy if thirty were found; and God said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." Still Abraham pleaded for mercy for the doomed city; "if twenty were found there." And God said, "I will not destroy it for twenty's sake."

Again, the last time, he prayed that if ten were found there, it should be spared. And the merciful One said, "I will not destroy it for ten's sake."

But, alas! In all that great, wicked city, not ten righteous men were found. Even the angels who went to warn Lot that God was about to destroy the city were so shamefully treated, that they smote the men with blindness, that they might escape out of their hands. Then the angels told Lot to take his wife, and his daughters, and their husbands, and flee to the mountains, for the city should surely be destroyed for its great wickedness.

The husbands of Lot's daughters would not believe this, and stayed in the doomed city. Even

Lot's wife had become so fond of the wicked city that she "looked back," which the angels had told her not to do. She was turned at once into "a pillar of salt." And Lot, instead of hastening to the mountains, as he was commanded to do, begged to be permitted to go to a little city called Zoar, which was not so far away. The angels kindly consented; but when Lot saw the awful smoke of the burning cities, he did not stay in Zoar, but hid away in the mountains.

It is not safe to live among vile, wicked people. Even Lot and his family were harmed by living in Sodom. He had chosen it for his home because the valley of Jordan was "well watered everywhere," even "as the garden of the Lord." But the beauty of the land did not make the people good and thankful to God.

The Book says, "The men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly."

Those who visit the site of these cities tell us that the rocks above the valley are full of bitumen. It does not concern us what materials He used in destroying the cities which He had

doomed. All the forces of the world which He made are at His command ; and we know that He utterly destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for their great wickedness.

QUESTIONS.

- What was Abraham called ?
- Who were sent to him ?
- What did the angels tell him ?
- Why would God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah ?
- What friend of Abraham lived in Sodom ?
- For what did Abraham plead ?
- Did God hear his prayer ?
- Were ten righteous men found in Sodom ?
- How did the men of Sodom treat the angels who went to warn Lot ?
- What did the angels do ?
- What did they then do ?
- Did all of Lot's family escape with him ?
- What came to Lot's wife ?
- Why had Lot chosen Sodom for his home ?
- Is it safe to choose wicked associates ?

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAMB WHICH WAS NOT SLAIN.

AN old man, bowed with the burden of grief and care; his only son, a beautiful boy; two servants, an ass, and wood for a sacrifice.

This picture was seen in the land of Judea, nearly four thousand years ago. Millions have looked upon it since with wonder and awe. The *soul* of the picture, that which we cannot see, was the burden which the old man bore. He had heard the voice of God calling, —

“Abraham! Abraham!”

And he had answered, as was his wont, —

“Here am I.”

Then he heard, —

“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will



ISAAC RESCUED BY THE ANGEL.

tell thee of." And, without a word, the old man had prepared for his journey, which had now lasted three days.

God had given to him this son, and had given him great promises for him. *How now can they be fulfilled?* The old man did not ask this question. He simply obeyed God. He said to his servants, —

"Abide you here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

Then he gave the wood to his son, and took the fire and a knife, and they went on together. And Isaac said to his father, —

"Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb?"

"God will provide Himself a lamb," the old man said; and he knew that the innocent boy was the lamb which God had commanded him to sacrifice.

When they had come to the place, the old man built an altar, and "laid the wood in order." Then he bound his son, and laid him

upon the wood. And he lifted his hand to strike ; but then he heard the voice of God again call, —

“ Abraham ! Abraham ! ”

And again he answered, —

“ Here am I. ”

Then he heard, —

“ Lay not thine hand upon the lad ; . . . for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me. ”

The happy father turned and saw a ram caught by the horns in a thicket close by. This he killed and laid upon the altar, and he named the place “ Jehovah-jireh. The Lord will provide. ”

This is the Christian’s watchword to-day.

QUESTIONS.

Whose voice did Abraham hear ?

What answer did he make ?

Had God made promises for this son Isaac ?

Did Abraham obey God ?

What did Isaac ask his father ?

What answer did Abraham make ?

When he had come to the place where God commanded him to go, what did he do ?

When he lifted up his hand to strike the lad, what did he hear ?

Was the father glad ?

What did he see caught by his horns in a thicket ?

What name did he give the place ?

What was the meaning of the word ?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH.

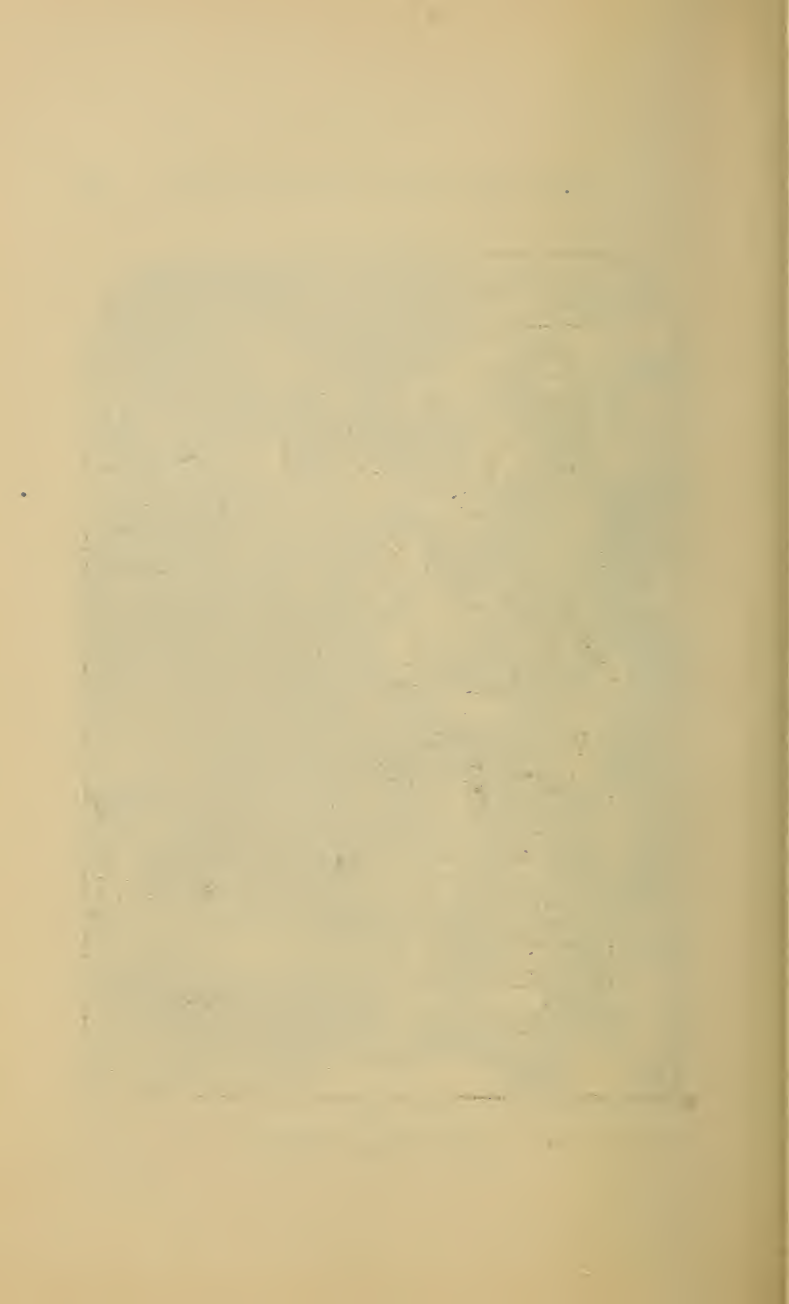
JOSEPH was the son of a shepherd, living in the land of Canaan. He had ten grown-up brothers, and one little brother younger than himself. He was seventeen years old, and was a true, good boy, and his father loved him.

It is very natural to love those who are lovely and good; but it is not always wise to show it too strongly. Partiality in a father breeds hatred in those who are not loved; and Joseph's brothers hated him because his father had given him "a coat of many colors," and had given them none. Joseph, too, had told his father of the evil things which his brothers did.

He dreamed two very singular dreams, which were prophetic. He innocently told these to his brothers, and they hated him the more. But Joseph had no hatred in his heart toward his bad brothers.



JOSEPH BEING SOLD.



They were feeding their flocks far away from home, and Jacob, the father, told Joseph to go and see how his brothers and the flocks fared. When these bad men saw their young brother coming, they said, —

“Behold, this dreamer cometh.”

Some said, “Let us kill him and cast him into a pit, and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.” One brother, Reuben, heard all this and said, “Let us not kill him.”

He told them to cast him into a pit in the wilderness. When his brothers were gone, he meant to take him to his father again.

When the poor lad came up they stripped him of his “coat of many colors,” and cast him into a dry pit, and “sat down to eat bread.” Reuben was away, and a company of Ishmaelites were passing, going down to Egypt. Then they took Joseph from the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. When Reuben came to the pit to release Joseph, he found it empty, and he was very sorry.

The wicked brothers dipped the lad's coat in the blood of a kid which they killed, and carried it to his father, saying that they had found it. And Reuben did not tell his father how false it was, though he wept so sadly and said, —

“I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.”

While Jacob was mourning so sadly for his lost son, whom he thought the wild beasts had slain, the traders had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of the king's household. Here he made friends, as he always had, by his truth and goodness; and his master trusted him with all he had. It is sad to read that a wicked woman, his master's wife, by a black falsehood, caused this true, pure man to be cast into prison, but God was with him even there. The keeper of the prison trusted everything to him.

There were two prisoners who had strange dreams; and as Joseph had the care of all the prisoners, he noticed their sad, downcast looks. He asked them why they were sad, and they told him their strange dreams. He said that “interpre-

tations belong to God." He told them that the fate of one prisoner was to be executed in three days, and the other was to be restored to favor in the same time. All this came to pass just as Joseph had interpreted the dreams; but the butler whom the king restored to favor forgot Joseph, and he still remained in prison.

But one night the king dreamed a dream which troubled him greatly, and no one could be found to interpret it. Then the careless butler remembered Joseph, and told the king of his dream while in prison, and of Joseph's true interpretation of it. And the king sent and took Joseph out of the prison. The king told Joseph his strange dream; and Joseph told the king that the Lord had warned him in this way, what He was about to do. He would give to the land of Egypt seven years of plenty and fruitfulness, and seven years of famine should follow.

Joseph advised the king to appoint a wise and careful man over all the country, to prepare during the fruitful years for the famine which was to follow. The king very wisely said to his servants, —

“Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?”

And he told Joseph that because God had showed him all this, and given him wisdom, he would set him over all the land of Egypt. He said, “Only in the throne will I be greater than thou.” He took off his ring and put it on Joseph’s hand, and gave him “vestures of fine linen.” There is nothing at this day known more beautiful than the “fine linen” of Egypt.

The king put a chain of gold upon Joseph’s neck, and named him Zaphnath-paaneah, which means “a revealer of secrets.” He made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried before him, “Bow the knee.” Joseph had been true and faithful to God amid all his trials and persecutions, and now He was rewarding him royally.

He had a sweet revenge upon his wicked brothers, who sold him into slavery. The famine reached Canaan, and his father and his brothers heard that “there was corn in Egypt,” and his brothers came down to buy. Joseph knew them at once, but they did not dream that the great

ruler before whom they bowed so humbly was their own cruelly wronged brother Joseph. He filled their sacks with corn, and put each man's money back into the mouth of the sack. They were greatly alarmed when they found the money, as they were returning home. The great ruler had kept them three days in Egypt. He told them that they were spies, and had questioned them about their father and their home. They had told him truly all about their father, their little brother, and the brother who "was not."

Joseph talked with them through an interpreter, and they had not thought that he understood every word they said among themselves. Reuben told them that it was because of their cruelty to Joseph that they were having such trouble. And the ruler had only let them go, as they promised to bring to him their young brother. He had even kept their brother Simeon, to make sure they would keep their promise. Now each man found his money in the mouth of his sack. Had some enemy done this? They were in sore trouble. When they reached home they told their

father all that had befallen them, and the old man wept and said, —

“Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin. All these things are against me.”

When the corn was gone, and the famine still continued, Jacob said to his sons, —

“Go again; buy us a little food.”

They dared not go back without their brother, and at last the father said, —

“Take of the best fruits in the land . . . a present, a little balm, a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds. . . . And take double money in your hand. . . . Take also your brother. . . . And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin.”

When they had come again to Egypt, and Joseph saw that they had brought his brother Benjamin, he told the ruler of his house to “bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.” The brothers were much alarmed when they heard this, and they told the steward of the money which

they had found in their sacks. But he told them to fear not. "God hath given you treasure in your sacks : I had your money."

Simeon was brought out to them, and they were told that they were to dine in the ruler's house. When Joseph came at noon, they gave him the present, and bowed themselves to the earth. He asked of their health, and of their father, if he was yet alive. Again they bowed themselves as they answered him. Then he saw Benjamin, and said, —

"Is this your younger brother? . . . God be gracious to thee, my son."

Now he could no longer control himself, and went into his chamber and wept. "He washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread."

How it was, they did not know, but the ruler seated each brother according to his age, and Benjamin was especially cared for. After a merry feast, Joseph ordered each man's sack to be filled full, and his money to be put in the mouth of the sack. Into Benjamin's sack he told his steward to put, with his money, his own silver cup.

They were very happy as they started homeward, but had only gone a little distance when the steward came searching for the silver cup. They were all shocked when it was found in Benjamin's sack, and went back at once to the city.

Joseph was still at his house; and Judah, one of the brothers, told him the pitiful story of his father's love and grief at the loss of his son Joseph. The great ruler had decreed that all might return to their country except Benjamin; and Judah pleaded that he might become a bondsman in the place of his brother. He could not think of going back without the lad, to witness his father's sorrow and death; for he said, "His life is bound up in the lad's life."

Joseph ordered every man to go away except his brothers, and then he wept aloud. He said, —

"I am Joseph. Doth my father yet live?"

Their shame and terror may be imagined, yet the kind brother told them not to fear. God had sent him to Egypt to save the people. He is able to overrule all that wicked men can do.

Joseph told them to hasten back to Canaan, and

bring their father, their families, and all that they had, and he would care for them all. For there were yet to be five years of famine.

This was Joseph's sweet revenge.

The meeting of Jacob with the son for whom he had mourned so many years is one of the most beautiful pictures in the Book.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Joseph's father ?

How many brothers had he ?

How old was Joseph ?

Why did his father love him ?

What did he give him ?

Why did his brothers hate him ?

What did Jacob bid Joseph do ?

When his brothers saw him coming what did they say ?

Which brother said, " Let us not kill him " ?

What did he tell them to do ?

Did he intend to save him ?

While Reuben was away, what did his brothers do ?

What did they tell Joseph's father ?

What did the traders do with Joseph ?

Did he make friends here ?

Who caused him to be cast into prison ?

What did the keeper of the prison do ?

What did Joseph tell the two prisoners who told him their dreams ?

Did the butler remember Joseph when he was restored to favor ?

What caused him to remember ?

Did Joseph interpret the king's dream ?

What did the king do for Joseph ?

Why did he do this ?

What sweet revenge had Joseph on his cruel brothers ?

How long did the famine continue in Egypt ?

Did Joseph's brothers repent of their great sin ?

What kind words did Joseph say to them ?

What did he bid them do ?

CHAPTER IX.

MOSES.

THE first picture we have of the great and good man Moses, is of a little babe of three months, hidden away in an ark of bulrushes, on the banks of the river Nile. His mother had hidden him there to try to save his life. The cruel king of Egypt had made a decree that all the male children of the Hebrews should be killed as soon as they were born. For his people were jealous of the Hebrews, who had now been in Egypt four hundred years. This King Pharaoh did not know Joseph; and the Hebrews were so many and so strong, that, do all he could, he could not keep them from prospering.

The king's daughter went down to the river with her maidens to bathe, and she saw the little ark among the rushes. She sent a maid to bring the ark, and the babe wept. The child's cry

touched the tender heart of the princess, and she said, —

“This is one of the Hebrews’ children.”

Miriam, the sister of Moses, who had been watching the ark, said, “Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women?” And the princess said, “Go.”

So Miriam went and called the child’s mother; and she cared for him till he was old enough to go to the king’s palace, when the princess adopted him, and called him Moses, because, she said, “I drew him out of the water.” Thus one of the doomed children became a royal prince, but God had a higher place yet for him.

His heart was filled with pity for his people when he saw how they were wronged, and he slew an Egyptian who was smiting a Hebrew. This came to the king’s ears, and Moses had to fly for his life. He went to Midian, where he became a shepherd. Here God called him to go to Egypt and lead His people back to Canaan. In their sore distress they had called upon God, and He had heard their prayer.

He spoke to Moses from a burning bush, which was not consumed. He called, —

“Moses, Moses,” and told him that He was God, and would send him to be a deliverer to His people. “And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.” He was a very meek and humble man; and the great God, who knew him better than he knew himself, told him what he was to do.

He was to go to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and tell him that the God of the Hebrews had met His people, and would have him let them go to their own land.

He warned him that the king would refuse, but that after great miracles had been performed, at last he would let the people go. Moses was still afraid, and said that the king would not believe that God sent him. Then the Lord changed the staff which Moses held in his hand into a serpent, then back into a rod again. He pleaded that he was “slow of speech,” and God said that his brother Aaron might go with him.

At last Moses and Aaron went before King

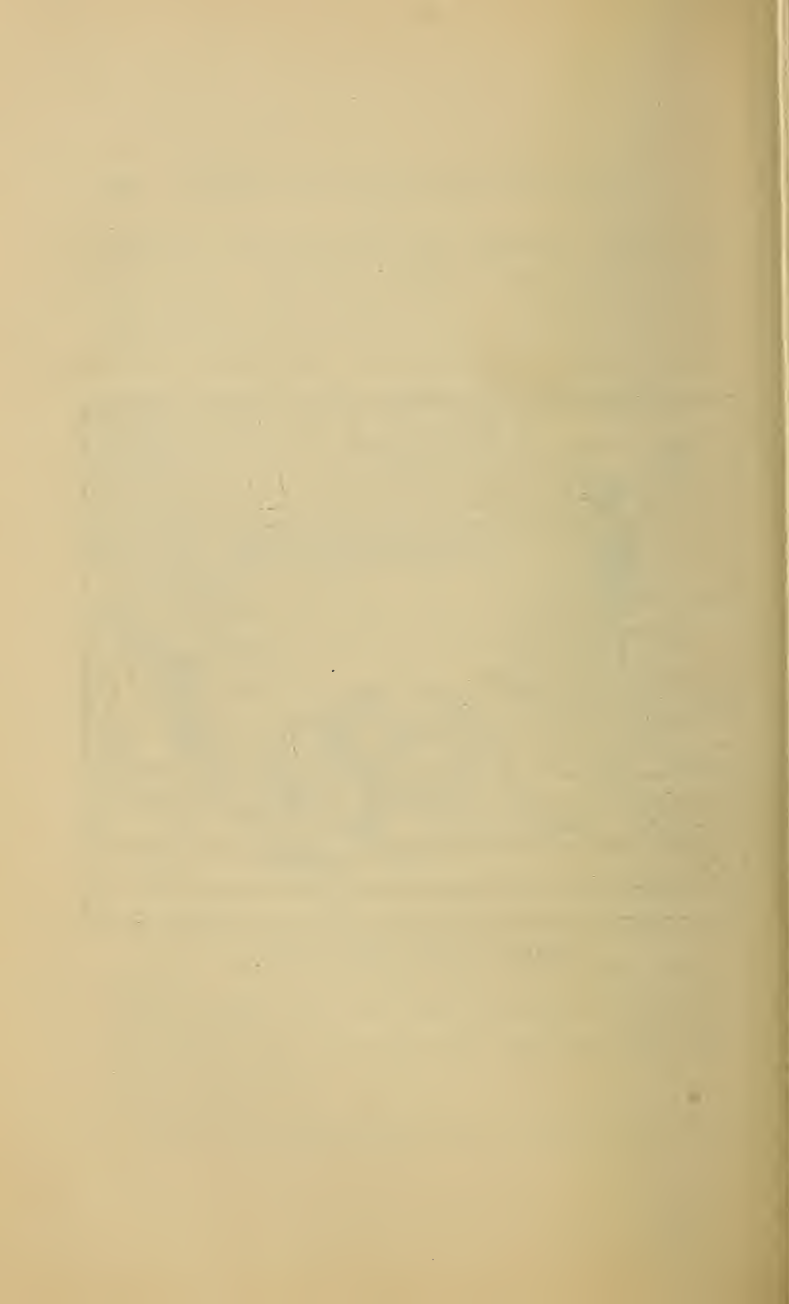
Pharaoh, and told him the message. The king was angry and said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice? . . . I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." And he gave harder tasks to the poor slaves, and made their lives very bitter. He was building grand public works, the ruins of which are seen in Egypt to-day; and, though he hated the Israelites, he would not let them go. So obstinate and cruel was he, that the Lord sent many plagues upon the land, which filled all the people with terror.

Sometimes he would consent to their going; but just as soon as the plague was removed, he would again refuse. At last the Lord told His people to kill a lamb, and to mark with its blood the posts of the doors of all their dwellings. They were to eat this lamb, one for every household, "roast with fire, and unleavened bread, with bitter herbs." For at midnight the death angel should pass through the land, and in every home where the blood was not upon the doorposts the first-born should die.

There was great mourning through all the land



DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.



of Egypt at midnight; for in every house, from the palace of the king to the prison, there was one dead. The people were in such mortal terror that they urged the Israelites to go now, and the king said to Moses and Aaron, —

“Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; . . . take your flocks and your herds, . . . and bless me also.”

The people sent them out in great haste, for, they said, “We be all dead men.”

The Israelites went at once; for they were all ready, with God for their Leader, and Moses for their guide. He gave them, to go before them, a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. But the unhappy king, as soon as he saw so many of his toiling slaves depart, was sorry he had sent them. He was so mad as to follow them with his army, and now the poor Israelites thought that they were lost indeed.

They had reached the Red Sea; on either side were mountains, and behind them, Pharaoh with his host. How could they escape? God drove

back the waters of His sea, and led them across on dry land. The Egyptians followed into the path which looked so safe; but the waters came back when the Israelites were safe over, and the Egyptians were all drowned.

As we read the story in the Book, we wonder that the people whom God cared for so tenderly could turn from Him.

Yet Moses had more trouble with the half million of his own people, whom he led, than with all the Egyptians.

Though he fed them with manna every day, and gave them water from the rock, so rebellious and stubborn were they, that Moses had to wander forty years in the wilderness with them, and at last was not permitted to enter the promised land.

He had, just once, when the people were mutinous, said, —

“Must *we* bring water out of the rock?” when it was God who did it.

Yet Moses was a man beloved of God. He had talked with Him alone on Mount Sinai, as a man talks with his friend, amid the thunder and light-

ning which made all the people tremble. There He had given him the summary of all righteous laws in the Ten Commandments.

Now God permits him to go up into Mount Nebo, and look down upon the land which He had chosen for His people.

He died there, and *God buried him.*

Moses is believed to have written the five books of the Bible known as the Pentateuch.

QUESTIONS.

Why was the little babe left on the banks of the Nile?

Who found him there?

Who was watching near by?

What did the princess tell Miriam to do?

What did the child become?

Why was he not satisfied?

What did he do?

Where did he go to escape from the king's anger?

Who called him back from Midian ?

How did God speak to him ?

What was Moses' character ?

Did he obey at once ?

Whom did God permit to go with him to the king ?

What was the message ?

How did the king receive it ?

Did the king let the people go ?

What were sent upon the land ?

How did the Egyptians feel ?

What was the last punishment God sent upon them ?

What did He bid His people do ?

What should happen in every house where the blood upon the doorposts was not found ?

Did this come to pass ?

What did the king and the people beg the Israelites to do now ?

What did they say ?

Did the Israelites go ?

Who was their Leader, and who was their guide ?

What token of His presence did God give to go before them ?

What foolish thing did the king do when he saw his slaves depart ?

What did God do for His people at the Red Sea ?

What became of the Egyptians ?

Were God's people good and obedient after all this ?

Where were the Ten Commandments given ?

How long did the people wander on account of their sins ?

Did Moses enter the promised land ?

Did he look upon it ?

From what mountain ?

What took place there ?

Who buried Moses ?

Who wrote the Pentateuch ?

CHAPTER X.

SAMSON, THE STRONG MAN.

SAMSON was noted for his great strength. From a little child he had been a Nazarite, which means "set apart for God's service;" and in his long hair, which had never been cut, lay the secret of his strength.

God used him as a scourge to punish the enemies of his people. These enemies, the Philistines, ruled over Israel because they did not drive them out as God commanded them to do.

Samson chose a wife from the Philistines; and when he went to see her, a young lion came out and "roared against him." Samson "rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand."

Afterward he burned the "standing corn" of the Philistines, who had wronged him, and they sent an army to take him. He allowed himself to

be bound and delivered into their hands. They were so delighted that they gave a great shout. He broke the cords which bound him, and with the jawbone of an ass he killed a thousand men.

He was made one of the judges of Israel.

At one time his enemies thought they had him safe in Gaza. But at midnight he took the gates of the city, and carried them away to the top of a hill.

But what all the power of his enemies could not accomplish, a false woman did. Delilah persuaded him to tell her where his great strength lay. And when he was asleep she cut off his hair, and his strength was gone.

Then the Philistines "took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house."

This was the man who, when the Lord was with him, carried away the gates of Gaza; who, since then, had for twenty years been one of the judges of Israel.

But while in prison his hair grew again, and his strength returned.

The Philistines made a great feast to Dagon, their god, to praise him that he had given their enemy into their hands. They brought the blind man out to make sport, and praised their god, and were very merry.

The house was full of men and women, and there were three thousand of them upon the roof, looking on and making fun of the prisoner; and Samson asked the lad who led him to let him lean upon the pillars on which the house rested. When he felt them, he prayed God for help, that he might be avenged of his cruel enemies. Then he said, —

“Let me die with the Philistines,” and grasped the pillars, and bowed himself.

The house came down upon the lords and ladies; and Samson slew more of his enemies at his death than he had during his life.

QUESTIONS.

For what was Samson noted ?

What did God use him for ?

Who were these enemies ?

Where did Samson choose his wife ?

What happened when he went to see her ?

What did he afterwards do to the Philistines ?

Did he allow them to take him ?

What did he do when they were shouting over this ?

What did he do at Gaza ?

What office did he hold ?

What did a false woman do ?

Where did his strength lay ?

What did the Philistines do ?

When his hair grew again, and his strength returned, what took place ?

What was Samson's prayer ?

What did he then do ?

CHAPTER XI.

THE STORY OF SAMUEL.

ONE of the most beautiful characters in all the Book is that of Samuel, who lived more than three thousand years ago, and who is known all over the world to-day. Samuel was blessed with a noble mother and a royal home. Hannah, his mother, was a woman of faith and prayer; and she gave the boy whom God had sent her to Him as soon as he was born.

She took him to the house of the Lord with offerings for sacrifice, and told Eli, the priest, that she lent the child to the Lord. Then she worshipped and sang a beautiful song of praise to God, which is written in the Book. Every year she brought her boy a little coat when she came up with her family to the temple to the yearly sacrifice. The child "ministered before the Lord," girded with a linen ephod. He waited on

the aged priest, and learned of him, and in after years became a great prophet, as we shall see.

It is sad to read, that in the very temple of God were vile, wicked men, Hophni and Phineas, sons of Eli the priest. The sin of Eli was that "his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." But Samuel was not harmed by these wicked men. He did his duty simply and faithfully. And God spoke to him at night, calling, —

"Samuel."

The lad ran at once to the priest, who, he thought, had called him, and said, "Here am I, for thou calledst me."

Eli said, "I called not, lie down again." And he obeyed. Again the voice was heard, "Samuel," and he ran to Eli, saying, —

"Here am I, for thou *didst* call me;" and again the old priest told him that he had not called him. He should lie down again. When Samuel came the third time, saying that Eli called him, the priest knew that it was the Lord. He told him to answer, if he was called again, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth."

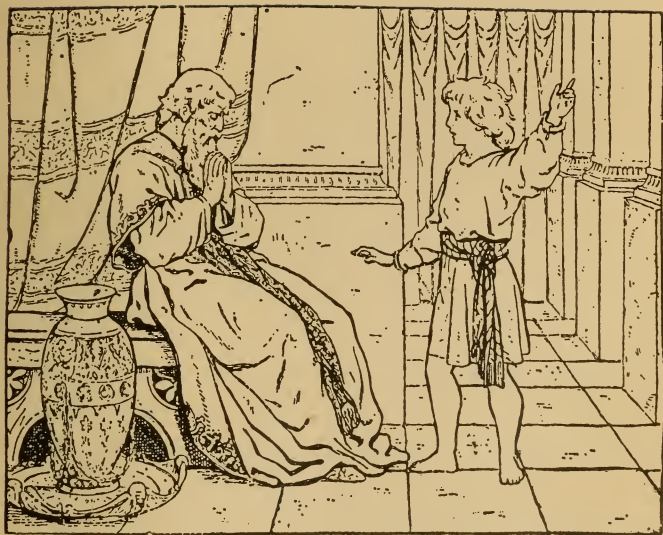
The voice came again, and Samuel said, —

“Speak, for Thy servant heareth.”

Then the Lord told him He would punish the house of Eli for their wickedness. In the morning the priest asked Samuel what the Lord had said to him. And Samuel told him truly. The poor, weak old man said, “It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good.”

And for the sins of the sons of Eli, the Lord suffered the Philistines to defeat Israel; and Hophni and Phineas were killed, and the ark of the Lord was taken. Now, the ark was the place where God manifested Himself to His people, and was very sacred. It was to be guarded very jealously, and the people knew that the loss of the ark meant the loss of God’s protection and care. When Eli heard that the ark of God was taken, he fell heavily, and his neck was broken. In one day all these sad events occurred, and all because of sin.

But the joy of the Philistines was great, because they had taken the terrible ark of God, which they so feared. They carried it to Ashdod, and placed



SAMUEL AND ELI.

it in the temple of their god Dagon. In the morning the people who went into the temple found Dagon lying on his face before the ark. They set up the idol in his place again; but the next morning they found Dagon lying on his face again, his head and both hands broken off, and only the stump left. And the people of Ashdod were sick, and many died, so they all feared the ark of God, and entreated that it might be taken away. The lords of the Philistines then took it to Gath; but the sickness and death followed, and the men of Gath soon sent it away.

They were about to carry it into Ekron; but the men of the city cried out:—

“They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.”

Then they began to believe that the only safe thing to do was to take this terrible ark back to its own place. They placed jewels of gold for an offering with the ark, and placed it on a new cart, drawn by two cows—the calves left at home—and sent it back to Israel. Now, the cows would not have left their little calves and gone in the

opposite direction if the Lord had not sent them ; but they went straight to Beth-shemesh, and the men of Israel, who were gathering the wheat-harvest, looked up to see the ark of God with the lords of the Philistines.

The cows were offered as a burnt offering to the Lord, and the lords returned to their own country. But the people to whom the ark was sent did not fear God as they ought. They offered burnt sacrifices in plenty ; but thousands of them crowded around the ark, and *looked into it*, which was strictly forbidden. More than fifty thousand men died for this daring sin ; and the people said, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God ?" and sent messengers to Kirjath-jearim to have them take the ark away.

It rested in this city twenty years ; and Samuel told the people, who "lamented after the Lord," to put away their false gods, and he would pray for them. Then they fasted and prayed, and confessed their sin. And Samuel was judge over Israel.

The Philistines came against Israel, but God was

with them, and they were driven back, and lost even the cities which they had taken from Israel.

Samuel was greatly loved and trusted by all the people, but his sons were not true and noble as he was. They "took bribes and perverted judgment."

The elders of Israel came to Samuel and said, —

"Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

God allows people to choose for themselves, whether they choose wisely or not. *He* had ruled over Israel, and no earthly king could govern so wisely or so mercifully as *He*. But they chose to have a king, and *He* told Samuel to "hearken unto their voice, and make them a king."

QUESTIONS.

Who was the mother of Samuel?

Where was his home?

What did Hannah tell Eli the priest?

What did she then do?

What did his mother bring to Samuel every year ?

What was Samuel's work ?

What vile men were in the temple of God ?

Whose sons were they ?

What was the sin of Eli ?

Was Samuel harmed by these bad men ?

What did he hear in the night ?

Who was it that called him ?

What did He tell him ?

When Eli asked Samuel what the Lord said to him, did Samuel tell ?

Did it all come to pass ?

What happened to Eli ?

Why were the Philistines glad ?

What happened to their god Dagon when the ark was carried into his temple ?

What happened to it next ?

What came to the people of Ashdod ?

What did they plead for ?

When the ark was carried to Gath, what took place ?

When they were about to carry it to Ekron, what did the people do ?

What did they now believe ?

What did they do ?

Did the cows go back to Beth-shemesh with the ark ?

What did the men of Israel who were gathering wheat do when they saw the ark coming home ?

Did the people to whom the ark came fear God as they should ?

How many died for disobeying God ?

What did the people say ?

How long did the ark rest at Kirjath-jearim ?

What did Samuel bid the people do ?

What was Samuel made ?

Was he loved and trusted ?

Were his sons like him ?

What did the elders of Israel say to him ?

Did this please God ?

Why not ?

Who had ruled over Israel ?

Did He grant their request ?

CHAPTER XII.

SAUL, THE KING.

THE man whom God chose to be king over Israel was Saul, a fair young man of the tribe of Benjamin. He told Samuel whom He had chosen, and that He would send the young man to him on the morrow.

The prophet was in the city where the people were preparing to offer a sacrifice in the high place; and when Saul and his servant came to him to inquire after the lost asses which they had been seeking for many days, Samuel knew at once that this was the man. Samuel took Saul and his servant into the parlor and gave them the highest places at the feast, and treated them with the greatest respect.

He told him that the asses which he had been seeking were found, and hinted to him that he was to be king over Israel. Saul was modest, and

instead of being elated at the thought, he told the prophet that he belonged to one of the smallest tribes of Israel, and that his father's house was among the least of his tribe.

Yet, when the prophet sent Saul away in the morning, he anointed him with oil as king. He told him that he should meet a company of prophets, and said, —

“The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.” Then he should “do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.”

This was a royal promise, and as soon as Saul turned away it all came to pass. Saul met the prophets, and “God gave him another heart,” and he prophesied among them.

Then the prophet Samuel called all Israel together. He told them he would show them the king; and when lots were cast, Saul, the son of Kish, was chosen. But they could not find him when they went to tell him. *He had hidden himself away.* At last they found him; and when the people saw his fine form, “from his shoulders upward higher than all the people,” they shouted, —

“ God save the king ! ”

But some evil-minded men despised him.

One of the cities of Israel was attacked by the Ammonites. Nahash, the leader, said he would “ put out all their right eyes,” and thus he would make a covenant with them.

The people wept; and when Saul learned the cause, he called together an army of three hundred and thirty thousand men, and attacked the invaders, and destroyed them. Then the people all were glad and proud to own King Saul, and he was generous. He would not allow one of those who had despised him to be slain. But, alas! King Saul’s great successes lifted him up. He forgot that he was victor because God was with him. He had only reigned two years, when he grew impatient because Samuel did not come to offer the burnt-offering when the land was again invaded. And *he offered it himself*, which was forbidden.

When Samuel came he told the rash king that God would choose another man to fill his place. But Saul was as unwilling to yield up the rule as

he was to be made king at first. Again he disobeyed God. He sent him to Amalek to utterly destroy them, and all they possessed ; but the king saved King Agag, and the best of the oxen and the sheep.

When the prophet asked him why he did this, he said that he had obeyed God, but the people had brought the oxen and the sheep *to offer in sacrifice* to God. Then the prophet said, "to obey is better than sacrifice."

The unhappy king pleaded with Samuel. He said, —

"I have sinned, . . . because I feared the people."

He asked that he might, at least, be honored before the people ; and that he might worship God. This petition was granted. But after the Lord had left King Saul to his own choice, an evil spirit troubled him.

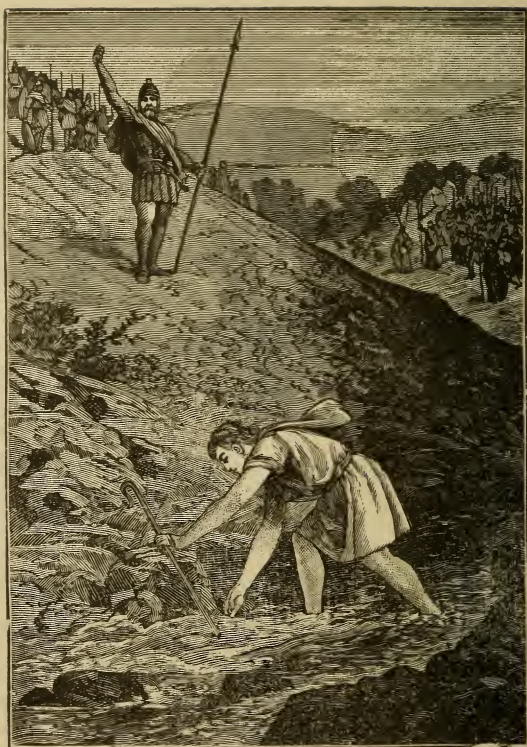
Samuel went down to Bethlehem, and anointed David, a young shepherd boy, whom God had chosen as the future king of Israel. And king Saul sent for this same shepherd boy to play on

the harp before him. When the evil spirit troubled the king, the music of David's harp drove it away, and he was well. Saul loved the boy, and all knew that the Lord was with him.

There was war again with the Philistines, and David was sent home, and his brothers went to the war. And Jesse, his father, sent David with presents to his brothers and to their captain. When he came where the two great armies were arrayed against each other, a giant named Goliath came out from the Philistines, and defied the Israelites. He had done this forty days, and all feared him greatly.

David's heart was full of anger at this man, because he dared "to defy the armies of the living God." They had forgotten this. When Eliab, David's brother, heard his brave words, he was very angry. He asked him why he had left his sheep, and told him that he had come down to see the battle. But David was sent for by Saul, the king. And the lad said, —

"Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."



DAVID GOES TO MEET GOLIATH.

The king told him that he was but a youth, and Goliath a man of war. Then David told the king how he had killed a lion and a bear, and that this proud giant should be like them because he "defied the armies of the living God." Saul said, "Go, and the Lord be with thee." But he would clothe him with heavy armor. David said, "I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them." He took his staff in his hand, and five smooth stones from the brook, and with the sling in his hand went out to meet the giant.

Goliath was very angry when he saw the fair, ruddy-faced, unarmed boy. He said, —

"Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" and "cursed David by his gods."

The boy did not tremble. He said, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, . . . whom thou hast defied. . . . The Lord saveth not with sword and spear . . . and He will give you into our hands." And David ran toward the giant, and with the sling sent a stone which sunk into his forehead, and the giant fell on his face. Then David ran and drew forth Goliath's own sword, (for he had none) and cut off his head.

There was great shouting now, and the enemy fled, while the Israelites pursued them. Of course David was a great hero now; but more than all the praises of the people he prized the love of Jonathan, the son of King Saul. But the king, who knew that the Lord had left him and was with David, hated him as much as his son loved him. Jealousy is as cruel as the grave, and so on the unhappy king sought to take David's life.

Jonathan helped his friend to escape, and David went to the prophet Samuel. The king sent men to take him at three times, but each time as soon as the men came to where the prophet was they began to prophesy.

The Lord was with David, and all the king's plans to take him failed. At one time he came into the very cave where David and his men were hiding, and David cut off the skirt of the king's garment. He would not kill him as his men wished him to, though he could have done it. He would not "lift up his hand against the Lord's anointed."

Saul sought to kill him, but David would not

harm Saul. At last Samuel died, and David lost a friend. And the king was so full of misery and despair that he went to a woman who dealt with familiar spirits, like the fortune-tellers nowadays. She was called a witch, and lived at Endor.

King Saul had killed all the others who dealt with familiar spirits; and the woman was afraid, for her calling was unlawful. She did not know who her visitor was; but he told her no harm should come to her, and asked her to call Samuel. When she had called, she cried with a loud voice. The king asked her what she saw. She said that she saw gods ascending out of the earth; an old man covered with a mantle. The king said, "It is Samuel." Then the prophet told Saul again that God had rejected him, and the king fell upon his face. It was so hard for him to believe that the Lord had left him in the way he had chosen.

The end came at last, and the king, and his son whom David loved, were slain by their enemies on Mount Gilboa.

David was their sincere mourner, and wrote a beautiful song to their memory. "The beauty

of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!"

The friendship of David and Jonathan is one of the most beautiful things recorded in the Book.

Another pleasant thing to read is the care which David always showed lest harm should come to the king who sought to take his life.

This spirit showed that the Lord was with him, while King Saul showed by his evil deeds that God had left him to himself.

QUESTIONS.

What was the man's name whom God chose for king?

What did he tell Samuel?

Where was the prophet? and what were the people preparing to do?

What did Samuel do with Saul and his servant?

What did he tell them?

Was Saul pleased to hear that he was chosen king?

What did Samuel do ?

What did he tell Saul ?

Did it all come to pass ?

What did the prophet tell the people when he called them together ?

Did they find Saul at once ?

When the people saw him, what did they shout ?

Were they all of one mind ?

What united them ?

Was Saul modest and thankful to God for this victory ?

Why did he offer the burnt offering ?

What did Samuel tell the king when he came ?

Was Saul willing to yield up his rule ?

Did he again disobey God ?

What did the prophet say to him ?

What came to trouble Saul ?

Whom did Samuel anoint as the future king of Israel ?

For whom did the king send to charm away the evil spirit when it troubled him, by the music of the harp ?

Why did Saul send David home ?

What did Jesse, his father, bid him do ?

What giant did he see at the place of war ?

Why was David so angry ?

Was Eliab pleased with his brother ?

Who sent for David ?

What did he tell the king ?

Did the king encourage him ?

What did he say at last ?

Did David wear the king's armor ?

What did he wear ?

What did Goliath say when he saw David ?

Was David afraid ?

What did he say to him ?

What did he do ?

What did the enemy do when their champion fell ?

What did David prize more than the people's
praise ?

Why did the king hate David ?

What did he seek to do ?

Who helped David to escape ?

To whom did he go ?

What happened to the men whom the king sent
to take him ?

Did the king capture him ?

Who was with David ?

Would he lift up his hand against King Saul ?

What did the unhappy king do after Samuel died ?

Where did he die at last ? and who was slain with him ?

Who was their greatest mourner ?

CHAPTER XIII.

KING DAVID.

SOME of the most beautiful poetry known was written by the shepherd king whom the Lord chose when He rejected Saul. The Psalms were the overflow of his heart, which was filled with the Divine Spirit. He reigned long and wisely over Israel, but he was not a perfect man. All his evil deeds are written in his history as truly as his good ones. But when he saw that he had sinned against God, he repented deeply, and tried to atone for his sin.

He was a great king, and was much loved by his people, who were very proud of him.

Yet he suffered greatly from a rebellious son, who perished in his sin, yet whom his father loved and mourned deeply. He showed his love for Jonathan, the son of Saul, by the kindness and care he gave to his lame son, Mephibosheth.

King David lived to a great age, a wise and prosperous king, and when he knew he was about to die named for his successor his son Solomon.

QUESTIONS.

Who wrote the beautiful poetry known as Psalms ?

Was he a perfect man ?

Was he a great king ?

When he knew that he had sinned against God, what did he do ?

Who caused him great sorrow ? and what became of this man ?

Did David love him still ?

How did he show his love for his dead friend, Jonathan ?

Did he live long ? and was his reign prosperous ?

When he was about to die, whom did he name as his successor ?

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WISE KING.

THE young King of Israel commenced his reign well. He “loved the Lord, and walked in the statutes of David his father.”

The Lord appeared to him in a dream and said unto him, —

“Ask what I shall give thee.”

And Solomon asked that wisdom might be given him that he might judge the great people rightly.

This answer pleased the Lord; and he gave him not only wisdom, but riches and honor. “As wise as King Solomon” has passed into a proverb.

King Solomon built the great temple at Jerusalem, of marble covered with gold, one of the most beautiful buildings the world has ever known. The temple was seven years in building, and many thousand men were constantly employed upon it. It was dedicated to the King of kings,

who is not only the Ruler of Israel, but the Creator and Ruler of all the worlds.

It *could not* have been too grand and beautiful for such a glorious Being, yet He loves the *human temples* which are His better than all this grandeur. The temple, which was so magnificent, its very floors overlaid with gold, is not so precious in His sight as the heart consecrated to Him, and which is filled with His love.

King Solomon built a beautiful house for himself, after the temple was finished. It was furnished with royal magnificence, for he was richer than any other king. The Book says he “exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.” More than these, *God talked with him*. He appeared to him the second time and renewed His promises. He also *warned* him faithfully, that if he turned from Him, He would “cut off Israel out of the land,” and that the temple itself should be cast out of His sight.

With these promises and threatenings from One whose word cannot fail, with every wish of his heart gratified, it seems strange indeed

that King Solomon, who wrote such words of truth and wisdom, should forget God. Yet a cloud of gloom rests over his closing history.

He taught from his own experience, that riches, honors, even earthly wisdom, cannot satisfy the deathless soul. Many, since he lived, have learned the same lesson. The soul, which is His immortal breath, can only be satisfied with God.

The wise, rich, glorious king died like the poorest beggar, for death levels all distinctions. His example is left us for a study, and for a warning. His words of wisdom, inspired by the Spirit of truth, will live forever.

QUESTIONS.

How did the young king commence his reign?

What answer did he make when God asked him what He should give him?

Did his answer please God?

What is a well-known saying?

What did Solomon build?

How long was the temple in building ?

Was it a beautiful building ?

To whom was it dedicated ?

Could it have been too grand and beautiful for Him ?

Yet what does He love more ?

What else did Solomon build ?

When God appeared to him the second time with renewed promises, did He also warn him ?

Did he possess all the wealth and honor that the world can give ?

Did they satisfy his soul ?

Who alone can do this ?

What levels all distinctions ?

What has the great king left for us ?

CHAPTER XV.

ELIJAH, THE PROPHET.

ELIJAH was a prophet of the Lord, who lived when Ahab was king of Israel. No other, of all the kings whose stories are written in the Book, has a worse record; unless we except Jezebe his queen, who seems to have been the inspirer of his evil deeds.

Perhaps her wickedness was natural, for she was daughter of Ethbaal, king of Zidon, who worshipped the god Baal; and she was herself a fierce devotee of the same false god.

It was a great sorrow to the good prophet, to see an altar to the false, foul god set up in the land which God had called His own, and to see all the people following the king and the queen in their worship of Baal.

The prophet told the king that there should be no rain nor dew in the land for three years. God would punish the land for its foul idolatry.

He told Elijah to hide himself by the brook Cherith, and that the ravens should feed him. Elijah obeyed, and every morning and every evening the ravens came with food for him; and he drank of the water of the brook until it dried up.

Then the Lord told him to go to the city of Zarephath, where was a widow who would sustain him. He obeyed; and when he came to the city gate, the widow was there gathering sticks. He asked her to bring him a little water.

As she turned to go, he said, —

“Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.”

Then she told him that she had not a cake, only a handful of meal and a little oil. She was just gathering sticks to cook it for herself and son she said, “that we may eat it, and die.”

Elijah said to her, “Fear not; go do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son.” The woman did not stop to question or to argue.

She obeyed; and the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse, did not grow less, though every day she made cakes for the prophet and for herself and son.

But the child was very sick, and “there was no breath left in him.” She cried unto the prophet, and he said to her, —

“Give me thy son.”

He took him from her arms, and carried him to the loft where he lived, and laid him upon his own bed. Then he prayed earnestly that “the child’s soul might come into him again.” God heard his prayer, and the child revived, and the prophet brought him to his mother.

The woman was very glad, and said, “By this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.”

The Lord told Elijah, when the third year of the drought had come, to show himself to King Ahab, and He would send rain upon the earth.

Obadiah, the governor of the king’s house, was a servant of the living God. When the queen ordered all the prophets of the Lord to be slain,

he had hid one hundred of them in two caves, and had fed them through the three years of famine.

Now Elijah met this good man; and when the king's servant saw him, he fell on his face, and said, —

“Art thou my lord Elijah?”

“I am,” the prophet said; “go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.” Then Obadiah told him that the king had sought for him through every nation, and if he should tell him that he was here, the Spirit of the Lord would carry him away, and the king would slay him. Elijah said, “As the Lord liveth, I will surely shew myself unto him to-day.”

So the king's servant told his master, and Ahab came to meet Elijah. His first word was, —

“Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”

The prophet said, —

“I have not troubled Israel, but thou, and thy father's house.”

He told him they had forsaken the commandments of the Lord and turned to Baal. Then he

told him to call all the people together at Mount Carmel, and all the priests of Baal. There were eight hundred and fifty of these priests, and a great multitude of people, who came to Mount Carmel at the king's call, and only Elijah, the prophet of the Lord. But he was not afraid, for God was with him. He said to the people, —

“How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” “And the people answered him not a word.”

Then the prophet said, —

“I . . . only remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.”

He told the people to bring two bullocks, and the priests of Baal should choose one, and “cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under.” He would “dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under.” They should call on the name of their god, and he would call on the name of the Lord. “And the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.”

“It is well spoken,” was the answer of the people.

The priests of Baal offered their sacrifice in the morning, and cried until noon, —

“O Baal, hear us!”

There was no voice; and they leaped upon the altar, and cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out.

Elijah mocked them, —

“Cry aloud,” he said, “for he is a god,” “he is talking,” or “he is on a journey,” or “he sleepeth.”

All the long weary day they called in vain on the false god. The four hundred “priests of the groves” joined in their prayers probably, but all in vain.

When the time came for the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah said to the people, —

“Come near to me.”

He wanted them all to see for themselves what God would do. “He repaired the altar of the Lord which was broken down.” Then he took twelve stones, and built an altar, and dug a trench around it. He laid the wood upon this altar, and cut up the bullock and laid it upon the wood. Then he said, —

“Fill four barrels with water, and pour it upon the burnt-sacrifice, and on the wood.” This was done; and he said, “Do it the second time,” and they did. Then, “Do it the third time,” and they did. “The water ran about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.”

Then Elijah prayed, —

“Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God.”

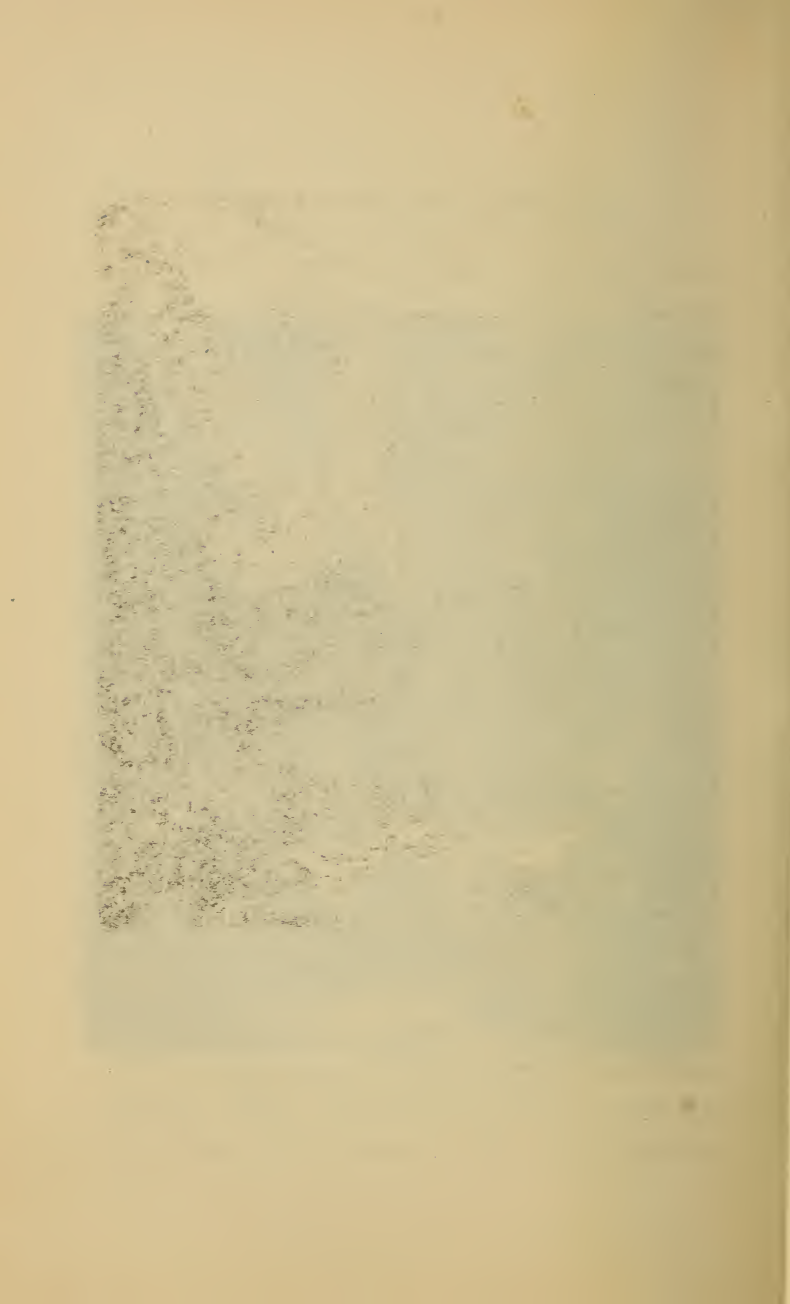
“Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” No wonder that the people fell on their faces and cried, “The Lord He is the God; the Lord He is the God.”

They were very ready now to slay the false prophets at the command of the prophet.

Elijah said to King Ahab, “Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.” The king with a glad heart went to eat and drink, and the prophet went up to the top of Mount Carmel to pray. He had the promise of One who never fails, still he prayed. He sent his servant



ELIJAH'S PRAYER ANSWERED.



seven times to "look toward the sea." The seventh time he told his master that he saw a cloud rise out of the sea "like a man's hand."

He told his servant to tell Ahab to prepare his chariot and go, lest the rain should stop him. He himself "ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." When the wicked Jezebel saw the rain which should save the ruined land, was she thankful? No.

She was so full of rage against Elijah when she heard of the death of her priests, that she sent him this message, —

"So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time."

Poor foolish woman! Her gods could no more help her revenge than they could answer by fire.

The good prophet felt her fierce hatred and prayed to die. But the Lord had more work for him to do. He went into the wilderness and lay down under a juniper-tree, and angels fed him. This so refreshed him that he went forty days, and came to a cave in Mount Horeb.

Here the Lord said to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" And Elijah said that he had been so jealous for the honor of God that they sought his life, and he was the only servant of God who was left. The Lord told him that He had seven thousand men who had not bowed down to Baal.

He told him to anoint kings for Syria and Israel, and a prophet, Elisha, to stand in his place. The prophet found Elisha ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and cast his mantle upon him as he passed by.

Elisha said, —

"Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and mother, and I will follow thee." And he offered a sacrifice, and followed Elijah.

King Ahab and his wicked queen did not learn to fear God who had been so merciful to them.

Near the palace was a vineyard which King Ahab wished to buy of Naboth, its owner, for a garden. But Naboth would not sell his inheritance. The king was sulky, and Queen Jezebel found out his trouble. She wrote letters in the king's name, to "proclaim a fast." Naboth was

charged with blasphemy, and witnesses were hired to witness against him. He was condemned to be stoned to death. When this cruel sentence was carried out, she went in triumph to her husband, and said, —

“ Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth; . . . for Naboth is not alive, but dead.” The king went to look at the vineyard which he coveted, and *met Elijah there*.

The prophet said, —

“ Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? . . . in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.”

“ Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?” the king said.

Elijah replied, that because he had sold himself to work evil, evil should come to him, and that he should be utterly destroyed. Of Jezebel, the wicked queen, he said, —

“ The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.”

And now, when Ahab saw his sin, and heard his sentence, he humbled himself before God.

And did God have mercy upon him? Yes; God cannot lie, so the punishment was delayed.

Three years longer Ahab reigned. He built many cities, and a *house* of ivory; but at the last he went out with the king of Judah to war with the king of Syria, and was slain. And “the dogs licked up his blood,” as the prophet Elijah had said.

The wicked queen, too, was thrown out of a window by her own servants, and the word was fulfilled, —

“The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.”

A wicked son of Ahab, named Ahaziah, reigned for two years after Ahab was killed. Then he was sick, and sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether he should recover. Elijah met these messengers, and said to them, —

“Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, — Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.”

When the messengers came to the king, he said, "Why are ye now turned back?" Then they told him their message, and he asked them "what manner of man" told them these words. They said, —

"He was a hairy man, with a girdle of leather about his loins."

"It is Elijah," said the king; and he sent a captain with fifty men to bring him. The captain saw him sitting on the top of a hill. He said, —

"Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down."

"If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty." The fire came down, and they were all consumed.

But the king sent another captain with his fifty. He must have been afraid; for he said, "O man of God, the king hath said, Come down quickly." Again Elijah said, —

"If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty." And they, too, were consumed.

The third captain of fifty whom the king sent

went up with his men to Elijah, and fell on his knees, saying, —

“ O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty, be precious in thy sight.” “ And the angel of the Lord said, . . . Go down with him : be not afraid of him.” So Elijah went down to the king, and told him that because he had turned away from the Lord to the false god Baal, he should die. And the king died.

The prophet's life had been a very sorrowful one. It grieved him sadly to see the people turning from the true God to worship idols. It was a heavy cross to be a messenger to the kings who hated him so, — Ahab and Ahaziah, — and often he had desired to die. He had been true and loyal to God, and now He was about to grant his prayer in a manner that would cause him to be remembered as long as the world shall stand.

The “ sons of the prophets ” at Bethel knew that the day had come when Elijah should be called home, and they told Elisha, his servant, but he answered them, —

“ Yea, I know it ; hold ye your peace.” The

“sons of the prophets” watched them as they went on to the river Jordan. They saw Elijah smite the waters with his mantle.

The waters divided, and the two passed over on dry ground. As they walked on, Elijah said to Elisha, —

“Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.” And Elisha said, —

“I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.”

They still went on; and as they talked, a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared, and “Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

Only one other is spoken of in the Book, who did not taste death. Enoch “was not, for God took him.”

Now Elijah is called. The God whom he served so faithfully when all around him bowed down to false gods, honors him as no other man was ever honored.

Elisha cried when he saw the grand spectacle, —

“My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.” “And he saw him no

more," but when he again reached the river Jordan, he knew that his prayer was heard. He smote the waters with the mantle of Elijah, and they parted as before, and he went over. The watching prophets said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha."

QUESTIONS.

Who was Elijah?

Who was king of Israel?

What was his character?

Who was his inspirer?

Whose daughter was she?

What did they worship?

Was Elijah grieved at this?

What did he tell the king?

Why was this?

Where did God tell Elijah to hide?

How should he be fed?

When the brook dried up, what did he tell him to do?

What answer did the widow make to his request?

What did Elijah say to her ?

Did the woman do as he bade her ?

Did the meal and oil fail ?

What happened to the son of the widow ?

Was Elijah's prayer heard ?

When the third year of the drought had come, what did the Lord tell Elijah to do ?

What servant of king Ahab feared to carry the message to his master ?

Why did he fear ?

When Ahab saw Elijah, what did he say ?

What did the prophet answer ?

What did he tell Ahab do ?

How many were the priests of Baal ?

To what mountain were they called ?

What did Elijah say to the people ?

How many prophets of the Lord were there ?

Did Baal answer when his priests offered sacrifice and prayer ?

What did Elijah say ?

What did he then do ?

Did the Lord answer by fire ?

What did the people do ? and what did they cry ?

What did Elijah bid King Ahab do ?

Where did he go to pray ?

How many times did he send his servant before he saw the cloud come up from the sea ?

How large was it ?

What did Jezebel say when she knew of all this ?

Could her gods help her ?

Did the prophet suffer for her hatred ?

What did he do ?

What did God say to him in Mount Horeb ?

For what nations did He bid him anoint kings ?

What prophet was to stand in his place ?

What did Elijah do when he found Elisha ploughing ?

What did Elisha say ?

What did he then do ?

Can you tell the story of Naboth ?

When the king had got his vineyard, whom did he meet there ?

What did Elijah say to Ahab ?

What answer did the king make ?

What did Elijah prophesy ?

What of Jezebel ?

Did the king humble himself ?

Was the prophecy fulfilled ?

What son reigned after Ahab's death ?

What did Elijah say to him when he sent to inquire of Baal ?

Was the king angry ?

What became of the men whom he sent to capture Elijah ?

Was the great prophet's life a happy one ?

What made it sorrowful ?

When he was about to be called home, who told Elisha ?

What answer did he make ?

When they reached the river Jordan, what did Elijah do ?

What did he ask Elisha ?

What did Elisha answer ?

What now appeared ?

How many others are spoken of in the Book who did not taste death ?

When Elisha saw his master going up, what did he say ?

When he returned to the river Jordan, what did he do ?

What did the prophets who were watching say ?

CHAPTER XVI.

ELISHA.

ELISHA, the prophet upon whom the spirit of Elijah had fallen, was met at Jericho by "the sons of the prophets," who had seen the waters of Jordan divided. They bowed themselves to the ground before him, and urged him to let fifty men go and search for his master. He said, —

"Ye shall not send."

But still they urged, until he said, "Send." After three days' diligent search, they knew that Elisha was right. Elijah would be seen on earth no more.

Elisha commenced his work at Jericho, where he healed the waters by casting salt into the spring. He said the Lord had "healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." The people of Israel had become so wicked that even the little children

came out of the city and mocked Elisha as he went to Bethel. They said, "Go up, thou bald head;" and "bears came out of the wood and tare forty and two of them."

The kings of Israel and Judah came to Elisha to "inquire of the Lord" when they went to war with the king of Moab. The king of Judah worshipped the true God, and Elisha told him that they should make the valley full of ditches; and though there should be no wind or rain, they should be filled with water. When the sun shone upon the water the Moabites thought that it was blood. They supposed that the kings were fighting each other, and cried, "Moab, to the spoil." They rushed forward, and were defeated with great slaughter.

A widow of one of the sons of the prophets came to Elisha and told him that her husband was dead, and that his creditor would take his two sons for bondmen. Her husband had been a true follower of the Lord, but had died in great poverty. Elisha asked the woman what she had in the house. She said, "Not anything, save a pot

of oil." He bade her borrow of all her neighbors empty vessels "not a few." When she had done this, she should shut the door, and she and her sons should pour into these vessels till all were full.

She did this, and the oil did not fail until the last vessel was filled. Then she went and told the prophet, and he said to her, —

"Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."

Though wicked men and even little children hated the good prophet, many loved and honored him. A "great woman," at Shunem, where Elisha often went, asked him "to eat bread." And every time he passed by her house, he rested there. The good woman and her husband were greatly pleased, and built "a little chamber," with "a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick," expressly for him. The good prophet felt all this kindly care, and asked the woman what he should do for her. Should he speak for her to the king or to the captain of the host? But the kind, contented woman only said, —

“I dwell among mine own people.” Still she was far happier when the Lord sent her a little son.

One day this child went out among the reapers. He cried to his father, —

“My head, my head.” And he was carried to his mother. She held him until noon, when he died.

The mother’s first thought was of “the man of God.” She laid the dead child upon his bed, and called a servant, and went at once to Carmel, where the prophet was. He saw her coming, and said to his servant, Gehazi, —

“Run now . . . to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child?” And she answered, “It is well.”

How great must have been her faith and trust in God! Yet when she came to the prophet, so great was her agony that she caught him by the feet. When the prophet heard her sad story, he sent Gehazi to lay his staff upon the face of the child. He himself followed with the mother, and the servant told him, —

“The child is not awaked.”

Then Elisha went in, and alone with God he prayed and labored to restore the child. How great was the joy of the mother when she heard him say to Gehazi, “Call this Shunammite.” For the life of the child had come back in answer to Elisha’s prayer; and he said to the woman, “Take up thy son.”

Truly the spirit of Elijah had fallen on Elisha, for he did the same miracles which his master had done. It was the spirit of God who gave him this power. He, the Creator of all things, and the Giver of life, can do whatever He will.

When Elisha was at Gilgal, and was eating with “the sons of the prophets” of pottage which had been prepared, one had carelessly shred the poisonous wild gourd into the pottage. As they were eating, they cried out, —

“O thou man of God, there is death in the pot.”

Elisha called for a handful of meal, and cast it into the pot, and it was harmless.

There was a dearth in the land, yet the true

worshippers gave to the Lord the "firstfruits" as He had commanded. A man brought to Elisha "twenty loaves of barley and full ears of corn in the husk." These were of the "firstfruits;" and Elisha said to his servant, "Give unto the people that they may eat."

"What, should I set this before a hundred men?" said his servant.

"Give the people, that they may eat," Elisha repeated; "for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat and shall leave thereof." All this came to pass, for the word of the Lord never fails.

Naaman was a great man in Syria, a captain of the host, and the king esteemed him greatly. But he was a leper. Naaman's wife had a little maid who had been taken captive and brought to Syria, and she said, —

"Would God my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."

When this saying of the Israelitish maid came to the king's ears, he said, —

"Go to, go, and I will send a letter to the king

some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith unto thee, Wash, and be clean?"

"Then he went down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan; . . . and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

Now he goes back to Elisha with all his company and says, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel," and he begged him to take "a blessing of thy servant." Elisha refused, though he urged him strongly. It was reward enough for him that his God was honored.

The "sons of the prophets" were building a house; and one of them dropped an axe, which he had borrowed, into the river Jordan.

He said, "Alas, master!" and Elisha said, —

"Where fell it?" And he showed him the place. Then Elisha cut a stick and cast it into the river, and the iron rose, and "he put out his hand, and took it." God made the laws which govern nature, and He can set them aside when He wills.

The king of Syria made war against Israel. And all his plans were told to the king of Israel by Elisha the prophet. The king of Syria was greatly troubled. He thought that surely he had a traitor in his camp. And he asked his servants, "Which of us is for the king of Israel?" One of them answered, —

"None, my lord, O king : but Elisha, the prophet, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber."

The king of Syria thought if he could capture Elisha all would be well. He was in Dothan ; and when his servant rose early in the morning, he found the city was surrounded by a great host. He said, —

"Alas, my master ! How shall we do ?" Elisha said, —

"Fear not : for they that be with us are more than they that be with them ;" and he prayed that the young man's eyes might be opened. Then the young man saw that "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

Again he prayed that the people might be smitten with blindness. The prayer was heard, and he led the Syrian army into the midst of Samaria. Their "blindness" was *seeing falsely*.

Now he prayed that their eyes might be opened, and they found themselves entrapped.

"My father, shall I smite them?" said the king of Israel. But Elisha said, —

"Thou shalt not smite them," and he prepared great provision for them; and when they had eaten and drunk he sent them away, and they went to their master. Was not that a beautiful way to treat an enemy? No wonder that "the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

The king of Israel was not a true worshipper of God; and when Ben-hadad, king of Syria, after this attacked Samaria, the people were in great distress. The king said he would take off Elisha's head, for he knew that this trouble was from the Lord. Elisha told the messenger that on the morrow there should be great plenty in Samaria. And it came to pass.

“The Lord made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses,—the noise of a great host.” Then “they arose and fled in the twilight,” and left all, and “fled for their life.” So all their riches fell into the hands of the Israelites, without their striking a blow.

All nations honored Elisha. He was in Damascus, and Hazael, the servant of Ben-hadad the king, who was sick, came to him to inquire if his master should recover.

The prophet wept when he saw this man, and told his future faithfully, how that he should return home, and murder the king of Syria, and become king in his stead, and should cruelly harass the children of Israel. All this God had revealed to Elisha. Hazael said, “Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?” But it all came to pass as the prophet had foretold.

Afterward he sent one of the “children of the prophets” to anoint Jehu as king of Israel. King Jehu destroyed the false gods in Israel, and executed the sentence God had pronounced against Jezebel.

At last, after a long life filled with great deeds which the Spirit gave him power to do, Elisha fell sick and died. The king of Israel cried over him, as *he* cried when Elijah was called home, —

“O my father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.”

It seems strange to us when reading these stories in the Book, that the people *could* turn away from God who did such mighty works for them, to worship false gods, the work of men's hands. But men do so now, with the Bible in their hands. *They* had only the prophets to teach them the way of the Lord.

QUESTIONS.

Who met Elisha at Jericho?

What did they insist on doing?

Did they find Elijah?

What miracle did Elisha perform at Jericho?

What became of the children who mocked Elisha?

What happened when the kings of Judah and Israel were fighting with the king of Moab ?

What miracle did he do for the distressed widow ?

What did the woman of Shunem do for the prophet ?

What great trouble came to her ?

To whom did she go ?

Did Elisha restore the child ?

Who gave him this power ?

What did he do to cure the poisoned pottage ?

How many men did he feed with twenty barley loaves and ears of corn ?

Who told Naaman of Elisha ?

What did the king of Syria do ?

What present did he send ?

How did the king of Israel feel when he read the letter which the king of Syria sent ?

Could leprosy be cured ?

What word did Elisha send to the king ?

What did he bid Naaman do ?

Was Naaman pleased ?

Why was he so angry ?

Did he obey at last ?

What did he wish to do when he saw he was healed ?

What did Elisha do for the sons of the prophets who were building a house ?

When the king of Syria warred against Israel, who told the king all his plans ?

What did the king of Syria think ?

Where was Elisha when the king of Syria surrounded him ?

What did his servant say ?

For what did Elisha pray ?

What did the young man see ?

For what now did Elisha pray ?

Where did he lead the Syrian army ?

When their eyes were opened, did they see their danger ?

What did the king of Israel wish to do ?

Did Elisha permit this ?

What did he do ?

Was this a good way to treat an enemy ?

When Ben-hadad invaded Israel after this, what did Elisha tell the king ?

Did it come to pass ?

What became of all the invader's riches ?

What did Elisha tell Hazael of Damascus ?

Whom did he anoint king of Israel ?

Who executed the sentence against Jezebel ?

What did the king of Israel do when Elisha died ?

CHAPTER XVII.

ATHALIAH.

THE story of this wicked woman is a very sad one. She was a worshipper of Baal, a daughter of Omri, and granddaughter of Ahab, kings of Israel. She had a sad inheritance of evil; for both these kings were worshippers of false gods, and chose evil rather than good. In this world people always *become like the one they love*. One who loves and worships God, grows to be pure and just and loving as He is. But those who worshipped Baal and the other false gods, grew wicked and vile.

Athaliah loved power more than she loved her children or grandchildren; and when she saw that her son Ahaziah, who was king, was dead, she resolved to be queen.

She "destroyed all the seed royal." But Jehosheba, the king's sister, stole one little babe

from among the king's sons, and hid him with his nurse in the bed-chamber. She was the wife of the priest, and kept him safe hidden in the house of God. This was a safe place; for the wicked queen usurper was a worshipper of Baal, and did not come to the temple.

When the child was in his seventh year, the priest brought the "rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, . . . and made a covenant with them," and showed them the king's son. They placed the troops so that the child should be safely guarded, and brought him to the temple, where he was crowned king of Israel.

The people clapped their hands and shouted, "God save the king." Athaliah heard the tumult, and came to the people in the temple.

She thought doubtless that she could quiet them by a word.

What she saw was this: "The king stood by a pillar as the manner was, and the princes and trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew with trumpets."

"Athaliah rent her clothes and cried, Treason,

treason." But the false queen was driven from the house of the Lord. She might not die there. "She went by the way which the horses came into the king's house, and there she was slain."

QUESTIONS.

Whose daughter was she ?

What did she worship ?

What sad inheritance had she ?

What do people become like ?

What did Athaliah love more than all else ?

What did she do when the king, her son, died ?

Was any one saved ?

Who saved the child ?

Where did she keep him ?

How old was he when he was crowned king ?

Were the people glad ?

What did Athaliah cry ?

What became of her ?

CHAPTER XVIII.

ESTHER, THE BEAUTIFUL QUEEN.

KING AHASUERUS was a great king of Persia, reigning over "a hundred and twenty-seven provinces," from India to Ethiopia. At a royal feast, Vashti, his queen, had refused to come before him as he commanded, and he had set her aside from being queen. He chose in her place Esther, a beautiful maiden who was among the captives taken from Israel. She lived with Mordecai, her uncle; and he charged her not to show who were her kindred or people when she went to the palace.

Esther's beauty, though it won her so high a place, seems to have been one of her smallest attractions. She was loving, brave, and true to her people, even at the peril of her life; and this is why she is remembered.

Haman, a proud, haughty favorite of the king,

was so filled with pride and self-conceit that, because one man, Mordecai, failed to bow and do him reverence, he determined to have a great revenge. Mordecai was a Jew; and Haman resolved not only to take his life, but the lives of all his people. For the Jews and Haman's people, the children of Agag, were hereditary enemies. He told the king that the Jews were a troublesome people scattered throughout the kingdom, who would not keep the laws. If the king would give the command that they should be destroyed, he would pay ten thousand talents of silver to those who had charge of the business.

The king took the ring off his hand and gave it to Haman. He said, —

“The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as seemeth good to thee.” Letters were sent to all parts of the kingdom that all the Jews, young and old, women and children, should be destroyed in one day. Then the king and Haman sat down to eat and drink, but there was great sorrow throughout the kingdom. Mordecai sent the sad news to Queen Esther; and she told him

that she had not seen the king in thirty days, and it was death to go into his presence, unless one was called.

Mordecai returned answer, that help would come from some source, though they might perish; and said, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Then Esther sent word to her uncle to gather all the Jews together, and fast three days and nights. She said, —

"I also and my maidens will fast likewise; so will I go unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

When the king saw the beautiful queen in her royal robes, standing in the inner court, he held out to her the golden sceptre, and she was safe. He asked what she would have. It should be granted her to the half of his kingdom.

She asked the king that he and Haman might come to the banquet which she had prepared. Haman was greatly elated that he alone had been invited to the banquet with the king. Passing through the gate, he saw Mordecai, who

did not bow down to him, and was so enraged, that after he had told his wife of the great honors the king had given him, he built a gallows fifty cubits high, to hang Mordecai upon.

That night the king could not sleep, and he called for the "book of records." As his servants read to him, they found that Mordecai had once saved the king's life. He asked what honor had been given him. They answered that nothing had been done for him.

His servants told him that Haman was standing in the court.

"Let him come in," the king said.

"What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" said the king.

"That is I," thought Haman. So he said that the man should be clothed in the king's garments, that he should wear the crown royal, and ride upon the king's horse. Then the king's "most noble prince" should proclaim before him, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor!"

"Do even so to Mordecai," was the king's com-

mand. And Haman obeyed. Through all the city streets he went, before the man whom he hated so, saying, —

“Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor.” Then he went to his house mourning.

At the banquet, on the second day, the queen pleaded for her life and the lives of her people.

“We are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish,” she said. The king said, —

“Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?” And the queen answered, —

“The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.”

The haughty favorite cowered in fear before the king and queen, as well he might. Harbonah, one of the king’s servants, said to him, —

“Behold also the gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman.” The king said, “Hang him thereon.”

So the proud, revengeful Haman died on the very gallows which he had built for the man who refused to bow down to him. And letters were sent to all parts of the kingdom, in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, that the Jews, wherever attacked, should "stand for their lives," and destroy their enemies.

Haman's sons were slain, and thus the evil which he had planned against the servants of the true God came back upon him and those who planned with him.

Esther, the beautiful queen, by her truth and bravery, not only saved her own life, but the lives of many thousands of her people.

QUESTIONS.

Who chose Esther for queen ?

Who was Esther ?

With whom did she live ?

Was beauty her greatest charm ?

What caused her to be remembered ?

What made Haman so angry ?

What revenge did he purpose to have ?

Did he secure the edict from the king ?

What was the sentence ?

What did Queen Esther do ?

Was the king pleased ?

What did Haman do when he was invited to the feast ?

What did the king find in the book of records that Mordecai had done ?

What did he ask Haman ?

Whom did Haman think the king delighted to honor ?

What did the king tell Haman to do ?

At the banquet, for what did Esther plead ?

What question did the king ask ?

How did Haman feel when he heard her words ?

What sentence did the king pronounce upon Haman ?

Were her people spared by the queen's bravery ?

CHAPTER XIX.

THE STRANGE BATTLE.

A GREAT battle was fought and a great victory was won, yet there was no flowing blood, nor clash of arms. The combatants were the Syrian host, under Sennacherib, and the invisible "angel of the Lord."

It was during the reign of good King Hezekiah, who had destroyed the false gods that the people worshipped, and restored the worship of the one true God.

The captain of the Assyrian host taunted the people of Jerusalem, whom they were besieging, with this. He told them that it was vain for them to say, "We trust in the Lord our God." Had not King Hezekiah destroyed the high places and made the people worship in Jerusalem? Had any of the gods of the nations which the Syrians fought against helped them?

The captain begged him to speak to them in the Assyrian language, for they understood it; and not in the Hebrew tongue. They feared to have the people on the walls hear his words.

But Rabshakeh went on. He told them not to trust in the Lord, nor in the king. If they would make *him* a present and come out to him, he would take them to his own fruitful land. But the people "answered him not a word."

Hezekiah the king sent for the prophet Isaiah, who was then living, to pray for them. The prophet sent this word to the king, —

"Thus saith the Lord. Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. He shall return unto his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

Hezekiah took this letter, and spread it before the Lord, and prayed earnestly. That very night the "strange battle" was fought.

"The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand."

And the king of Assyria went back to his own country. He still worshipped false gods; and while he was worshipping in the temple of Nis-roch, his god, his own sons slew him.

QUESTIONS.

Who led the Syrian host ?

Who was king of Israel ?

Was he a good man ?

What did the captain of the Assyrian host say to the people ?

Why did the captain of the besieged city beg him to speak in his own language ?

Did he listen to the request ?

What did the prophet Isaiah tell the king ?

What did King Hezekiah do ?

Who smote the Assyrians ?

How many were slain ?

What became of the king of Assyria ?

CHAPTER XX.

THE STORY OF DANIEL.

SINCE the world was made, there has been nothing grander known than a pure, noble, upright character. The man who has built it takes it with him to his eternal home, and also leaves it for a lesson of beauty to those who come after him.

Daniel, one of the princes of the royal line of Judah, built such a character nearly three thousand years ago, and it is studied all over the world to-day. He was carried captive, with Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and many noble prisoners, to Babylon, by King Nebuchadnezzar, when a little more than twelve years of age.

A captive boy in a strange land, it did not look probable that through three dynasties he should be one of the chief *rulers* of that land, and that he should live to be more than ninety years old. But he *began right*, and God was with him.

The king chose several of the brightest and fairest of the royal captives "to stand in the king's palace," and to be taught the tongue and the learning of the Chaldeans. These were to be fed from the king's table, and to have a daily allowance of wine such as he drank. Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

"God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince" who cared for them, and when he asked him that they might have pulse to eat and water to drink, instead of defiling themselves with king's meat and wine, he was in great trouble. He feared that they would not thrive on this meagre diet, and said, "Then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king." But Daniel said to Melzar, the caretaker, —

"Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days." Then he should decide.

At the end of ten days the four who ate pulse and drank water were examined by the king. "He found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm," in "all matters of wisdom and under-

standing." They had sound bodies and clear heads. They obeyed God, and He taught them.

The king had a strange dream, which troubled him so that when he asked his wise men to tell him what it was — for it had gone from him — and they failed, he ordered all the wise men to be slain.

When they came to Daniel, he told them that he would give the interpretation, if the king would give him time. He called his three friends, and they prayed that God would reveal the secret to them. Their prayer was heard, and God revealed all to Daniel. "Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven."

He went to the king and told him that there was a God in heaven who alone could reveal the secret. And he told him the dream, which was a prophecy, and the interpretation. The king said, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings."

He gave Daniel great gifts, and made him ruler over all the province of Babylon, and his companions were given places of trust.

Yet the king was not a true worshipper. As the years went by, the Chaldean princes were jealous of the Jews, — Mishael, Hananiah, and Azariah, whom the king had named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He had given them the offices which they thought belonged to them. They meant to have revenge.

So in the absence of Daniel, they persuaded the king to make a great image of gold, and set it up in the plain of Dura. He called together all his princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, and counsellors, and a herald cried aloud that when they heard the sound of all kinds of instruments of music, all the people should fall down and worship. If any did not obey, they should be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And at the sound of the music all the people fell down and worshipped the image, except the three Jews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Their enemies in triumph went to the king, and told him that these men did not bow down to the image. The king was very angry, and sent for these men. He charged them that they should

bow down and worship the image when the music sounded, or they should be cast into "a burning fiery furnace;" and, he said, "Who is that God who shall deliver you out of my hands?" The men answered him calmly, —

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king."

This so enraged the king that he commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated. Then the most mighty men of his army should bind these three men, and cast them into the furnace. This was done, and so fierce was the heat that the mighty men who bound them were all slain.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell down bound into the midst of the furnace, but the king rose in haste.

"Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" he said.

"True, O king," the people said.

“Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt,” said the terrified king; “and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

He went near the mouth of the furnace and called, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth.” And they came out from the fire, safe and unharmed. There was not even the smell of fire upon their garments.

All the people saw the wonderful sight; and the king said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, but their own God.”

He also made a decree that if any one should speak against this God he should be destroyed, “because there is no other God who delivers after this sort.” And these three true men were again promoted in the province of Babylon.

But King Nebuchadnezzar was very slow to

learn, though he saw the great power of the true God. He had another prophetic dream, and sent for Daniel. Daniel was greatly troubled. He said, —

“My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation to thine enemies.”

The dream was of a beautiful wide-spreading tree. The king saw “a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven.” He cried, “Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit.” But the stump of the tree should remain until seven times passed over it.

Daniel told the king that the tree was himself. He had grown strong, and his dominion reached to the ends of the earth. Yet he should be driven from among men, and should eat grass as the oxen, until seven years should pass over him; till he learned that “the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”

Then Daniel besought the king to break off his sins, and it might be the evil would be put off.

Did the king heed Daniel's words? Pride and self-conceit seem to have been his great weaknesses.

A year later as he was walking in the palace of Babylon he said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" All around him lay the beautiful city, one of the fairest the world ever saw, and his heart was filled with pride and exultation.

At that very moment a voice fell from heaven, —
"O Nebuchadnezzar, . . . the kingdom is departed from thee."

The king's reason left him, and he was driven out among the beasts of the field, as he had seen in his dream. Daniel ruled the kingdom wisely the seven years of the king's exile. Then his reason was restored, and all his treasures and honors were his again. Better than all, he "blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him that liveth forever."

At the death of King Nebuchadnezzar, his son, Belshazzar, the last of the Chaldean kings, reigned in his stead. He chose young men for his coun-

sellors, and Daniel was forgotten. He had no fear of God, and even took the holy vessels taken from Jerusalem, which had been dedicated to His service, for his impious feasts.

At one of these drunken orgies, a hand appeared on the wall, and wrote words which no man could understand. The terrified king called in his wise men and astrologers, but none could read the words. Then he said that the man who read it should be clothed in scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and should be third ruler in the kingdom. All in vain, and the king was in despair.

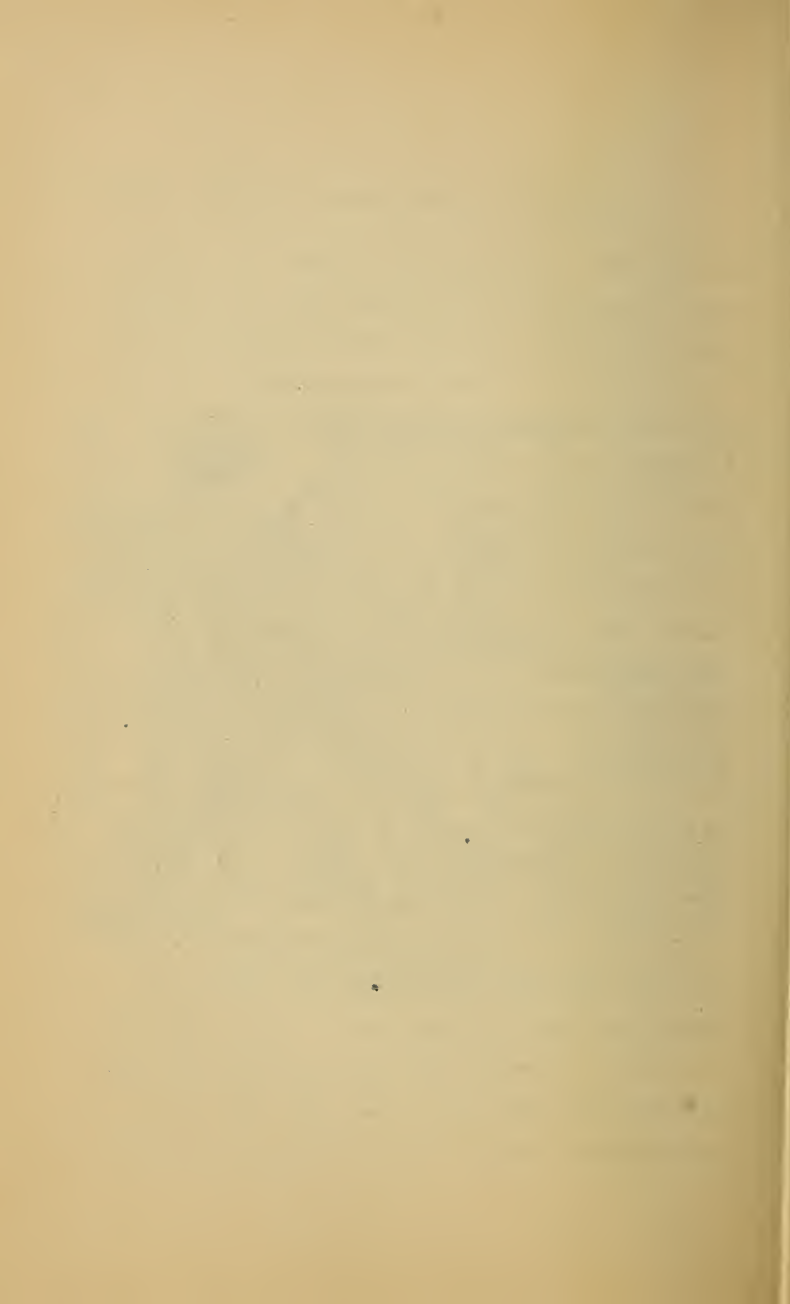
The queen, hearing of the strange occurrence, came to the banquet house, and told him of Daniel, the great and wise man in whom was "the spirit of the holy gods." His father had trusted and honored him greatly.

Daniel was immediately sent for; and the king told him what honors awaited him if he could read the writing upon the wall.

"Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another," said Daniel to the king;



THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALI.



“yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known the interpretation.” He told the king of the judgments God had sent on his father and said, —

“And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this.”

He told him that he had lifted up himself against the God of heaven, and defiled the holy vessels of His house by drinking wine in them, and “praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.” “And this is the writing that was written, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.” This signified that he was weighed in the balances and found wanting, that God had numbered his kingdom, and finished it. That very night the terrible sentence came true. The king was slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom.

This Median king had the wisdom to set Daniel over all the rulers of his realm, “because an excel-

lent spirit was in him." This preferment aroused the jealousy of the other rulers, and they plotted to destroy him. But he was so just and true in all his doings, that they said, —

"We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

They went to the king and said, "King Darius, live for ever." They told him that all the princes and people wished him to make a decree, that whoever should ask any petition of any god or man for thirty days, except the king, should be cast into the den of lions. This sounded loyal and would please the people. So without suspecting evil, King Darius made the decree.

It was the custom of Daniel to kneel in his house "with his windows open toward Jerusalem" three times every day, and pray and give thanks unto God. He knew of the decree of the king; but when his enemies came to his house, they found him "praying and making supplications unto his God."

They went at once to King Darius, and told him

that Daniel had not regarded his decree, "but maketh his petition three times a day." Then the king saw what he had done, and "was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him, and labored till the going down of the sun." All in vain, for the decrees of the Medes and Persians could not be changed.

Then Darius gave command that Daniel should be cast into the den of lions. But he said to him, —

"Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee."

When Daniel had been cast into the lions' den, a stone was placed upon its mouth, and the king sealed it with his own signet. The enemies of Daniel thought now, surely, their triumph was sure. But the king passed the night fasting in his palace. He would not permit instruments of music to be brought before him; but as the weary hours went by, he watched and waited for the dawn.

"Very early in the morning" he went to the den of lions, and cried "with a lamentable voice,"

at the mouth of the den: "Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

And from the deep recesses came a voice, clear and strong, —

"O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, who hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

Who can describe the king's joy as he heard these words. Pagan as he was, he had seen the mighty works of God, and believed on Him. Now his favorite prince had been delivered by miraculous power.

He commanded that Daniel should be taken up out of the den, and "no manner of hurt was found on him, because he believed in his God."

Now the king gave command that Daniel's accusers and their families should be cast into the lions' den, and they were torn in pieces before they came to the bottom of the den. The wild

beasts always obey the voice of their Creator. Man alone has power to choose, or to refuse obedience to Him.

Daniel retained his office through the reign of Darius, and for some years after Cyrus the Persian came to the throne. Though carried away from Jerusalem in his early boyhood, throughout his long life he loved her, and prayed for her restoration. And his prayer was heard; for, before he died, he saw Ezra, with more than forty thousand of his people, go forth at the command of King Cyrus, to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

The king gave into their charge also five thousand and four hundred vessels of gold and silver, holy vessels which had been dedicated to God for His temple, which King Nebuchadnezzar had carried away to Babylon.

Daniel had wonderful visions, which only God could give him. In the first year of King Belshazzar, he dreamed a strange dream, which was fulfilled word for word in the history of the nations. Again, in the third year of this king, he had a vision. He was in a deep sleep, and the

angel Gabriel touched him, and he sat upright. Then a wonderful revelation was given him. He was so overcome that he fainted, and was sick "certain days," afterwards he "rose up and did the king's business."

In the first year of King Darius, Daniel prayed earnestly for his people, "with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes."

His prayer was, —

"O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

The angel Gabriel again appeared to him, and told him of the future coming of Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

In the third year of King Cyrus he had another vision.

After long weeks of fasting, he saw "a certain man, clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms

and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." The men who were with him did not see the vision, but "a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves."

Prostrate upon the ground, and with no strength, a hand touched Daniel and lifted him up. Then the angel said to him, —

"O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to thee." He told him to "fear not," for from the first God had heard his prayer. Then he told him of the purpose of God concerning His people, and many things of the nations about him.

He is known as a prophet and revelator, writer of one of the most wonderful and mysterious books of the Bible. These are his words, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

QUESTIONS.

Who was Daniel ?

Where was he carried captive ?

What did the king decide to do with some of the brightest captives ?

Why did Daniel and his three friends request that they might have pulse to eat and water to drink, instead of the king's meat and wine ?

Why did Melzar fear to grant their request ?

Did he at last ?

How did they appear at the end of ten days ?

Who told the king the dream he had forgotten ?

What did the king do for Daniel ?

In his absence, what plot was made against his three friends ?

Did they bow down to the golden image ?

Was the king angry ?

What command did he give ?

What did the king see when the men had been cast into the fiery furnace ?

Did the fire harm them ?

What did the king say ?

What became of the men who were so true to God?
Did Daniel tell the king the interpretation of
his second dream?

Did it come to pass?

Was his reason restored?

After the king's death, who reigned?

Did he remember Daniel?

What great sin did he commit at one of his
drunken feasts?

What appeared upon the wall?

Could the wise men read the words?

Who told the king about Daniel?

Did he read the words?

What did they say?

When was the city taken and the king slain?

Who took the kingdom?

What did Darius do for Daniel?

Were his other rulers pleased?

What did they persuade the king to decree?

Did these men know Daniel's daily custom?

Did he cease praying to God because of the decree?

How did Darius feel when the case was re-
ported to him?

Could the decree be changed ?

What did Darius say to Daniel when he gave the command for him to be cast into the den of lions ?

How did he spend the night ?

What did he do early in the morning ?

What question did he ask ?

Who answered him ?

Was the king glad ?

To whom did Daniel give the glory ?

What did the king command should be done to the accusers of Daniel ?

Did the lions spare them ?

What always obeys the voice of the Creator ?

Who alone has power to refuse obedience ?

What king reigned after Darius ?

Did Daniel forget Jerusalem ?

Were his prayers for her heard ?

What did he see before he died ?

Who gave to Daniel his wonderful visions ?

How is he known ?

What beautiful words did he write near the close of his book ?

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TEMPLE REBUILT.

THE true worshippers of God love his temple, the house where he meets with them in holy communion, next to Himself.

The captive Jews mourned over the destruction of the beautiful temple which King Solomon had built, even more than that of their loved homes. Daniel had been cast into the den of lions because he would pray with his windows open toward Jerusalem. Prayer was heard, and God moved the heart of King Cyrus to send the Jews back to their own country. He told them to build again the temple of God, and gave to them, to place in it, all the holy vessels of gold and silver which King Nebuchadnezzar had brought to Babylon.

When the people of God were once more in their own land, they were yet in fear of the

hostile nations around them, and hastened to set up the altar, and to offer sacrifices. Enemies often do us great service by driving us to a place of safety.

It was no easy task to build again the temple. False friends came and wished to join in the work, and bitter enemies made complaints against them to the king.

But the foundations were laid amid the sounding of trumpets and cymbals, the singing and shouting of the people; and many of the old men wept aloud for joy. "So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

The work of building went on amid many hindrances and discouragements. The people themselves were often false, and broke the law of God. But they had true, noble leaders, such as Ezra and Nehemiah, who read to them the book of Moses, and prayed and made confessions of sin.

A good many years later it was written in the Book, —

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Over and over again this promise was given; so these good men came with confidence to God, and prayed for the people.

At last the temple was completed, and dedicated with great sacrifices and rejoicings. Even then the prophet had great sorrow, as good men have at this day, that all do not observe the divine command, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

But the promise of God was fulfilled; and again the people had the joy of seeing the holy and beautiful temple dedicated to the worship of the one God, and their loved Jerusalem the home of His people.

QUESTIONS.

Who love God's holy temple ?

Did the captive Jews forget their holy and beautiful house which the great King Solomon built ?

Did they forget their homes ?

Had Daniel prayed for the restoration of the temple ?

What king ordered it to be rebuilt ?

Who moved his heart ?

What did he tell the Jews ?

What did he give back to them ?

When the Jews had reached their own land, did they have any more trouble ?

What good service do our enemies do us ?

What happened when the foundations were laid ?

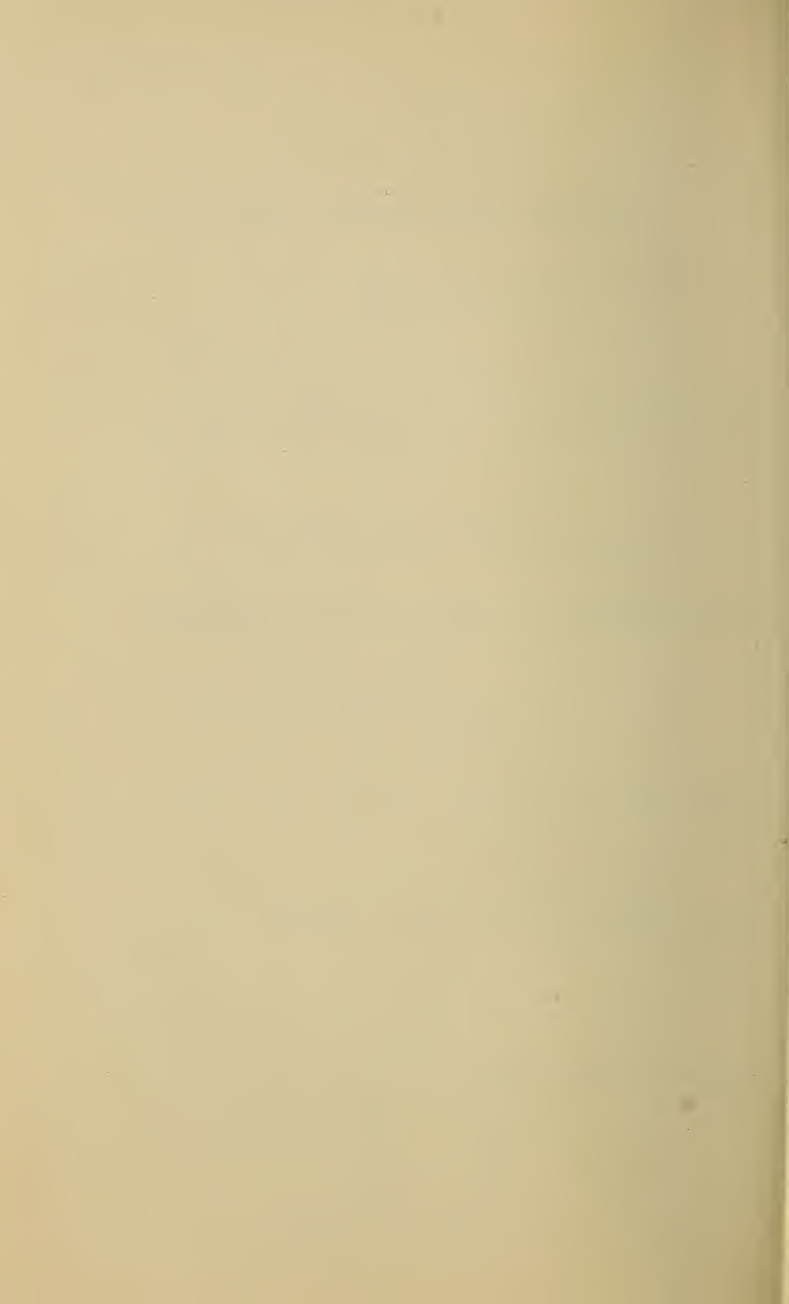
Were the people all true ?

Who were their leaders ?

What great sorrow had Ezra like what good men have at this day ?

TRUE STORIES FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.

PART II.



CHAPTER I.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

NEARLY four thousand years of the world's history as recorded in the Book had passed. The prophecies, which had looked so improbable, were being fulfilled.

The "king of Grecia," foretold by Daniel, and known to the world as "Alexander the Great" (he was only a sword in the Lord's hand), had been met by a white-robed procession, led by the high priest Jaddua, as he drew near Jerusalem to destroy it, and had spared the city. He had even done reverence to the high priest, and kissed the sacred emblems.

After him the Egyptians and Syrians had alternately ravaged the country, and the people were anxiously waiting for the coming of the promised Messiah. They thought that he would come as a mighty king, who would throw off the

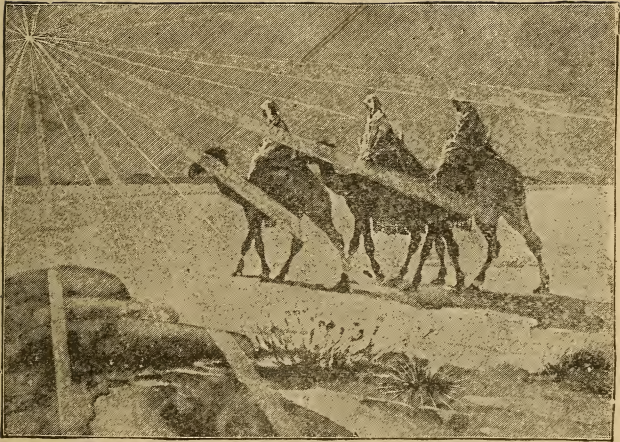
Roman yoke, and restore their former greatness. But the "Light of the World" came in a manner quite unlike what they were expecting, though the prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

Herod, the Idumean, who had won the favor of the Roman emperor, and been made king over Judea, was very jealous of the Messiah, whom all were talking of and expecting. Great was his alarm when he heard of the coming to Jerusalem of the "wise men from the East." They were seeking for the new-born King; for, they said, "We have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him."

The Book says, "he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him." Why? He was not a friend of God, and he feared for his throne.

He sent for the chief priests and scribes, and "demanded of them where Christ should be born." They turned to the prophet Micah, and read, —

"And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel."



FOLLOWING THE STAR.



The crafty Herod thinks he has it all in his own hands now. He sent for the wise men privately, and asked them about the star. He told them to go to Bethlehem, and "search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

How could they know the cruel design of this crafty king? Yet they rejoiced when they again saw the star, which went before them to Bethlehem, and stood over the place where the young child was. They did not think of the humble birth-place of this wonderful Being; but when "they saw the young child with Mary his mother, they fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold and frankincense and myrrh."

The Lord warned them in a dream not to return to Herod, and they departed into their own country another way.

In that country, on the night that Jesus was born, shepherds watching their flocks by night,

saw a great light, and the angel of the Lord, and "they were sore afraid." The angel said, "Fear not; for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men."

Words cannot picture this wonderful scene more clearly than the ones used in the Book. No wonder that the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem to see this child of whom the angels sung, and seeing Him with Mary His mother, should tell the glad story abroad. "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

There was in Jerusalem at this time a good man named Simeon, to whom it had been revealed that "he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." When, eight days after His birth,

Mary and Joseph brought the young child to the temple to present Him to the Lord, Simeon led "by the Spirit" was there.

Mary saw him take the child in his arms, and heard him say, —

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Then he blessed Joseph, and Mary the mother, and said words to her which she did not understand.

Anna, the prophetess, a widow eighty-four years of age, who stayed constantly in the temple, and "served God with fasting and prayers night and day," coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

The first year of the life of the Saviour was spent in Egypt. An angel of the Lord warned them of Herod's wicked plot to take His life, and bade them go to Egypt and remain there till he should bring them word. For Herod, when he saw that the wise men did not return and tell him of the child, was very angry, and "sent forth, and

slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under."

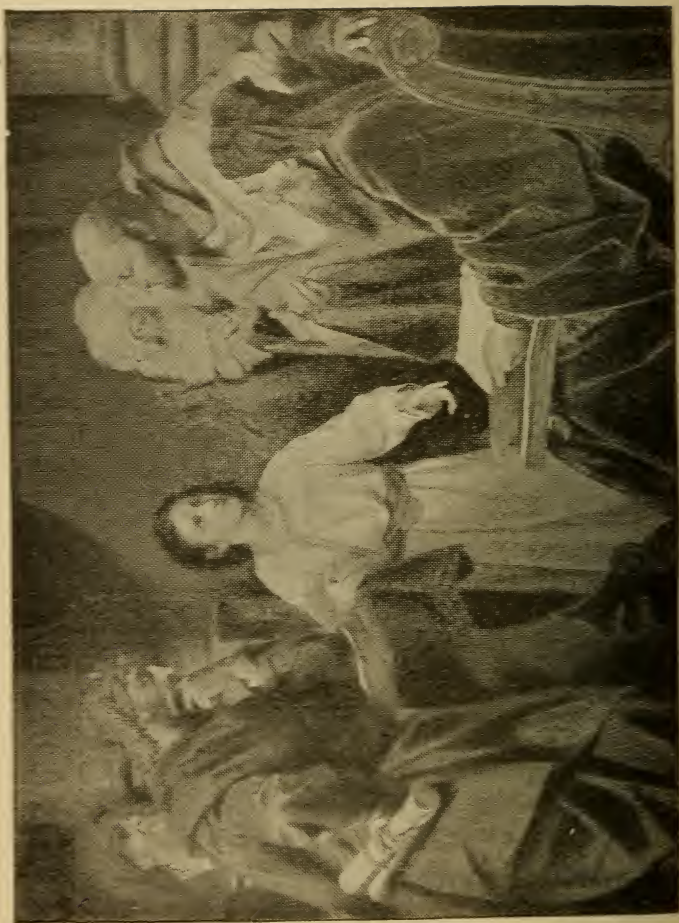
Foolish king! He tried to measure strength with Jehovah. Joseph and Mary and the young child were safe in Egypt, while in all the homes of Bethlehem mothers were crying for their murdered children.

The gifts of the wise men, probably, made the way easy for them; and the cruel king was cut down in a year, and the angel told them to return to Israel, where they found that the son of the cruel Herod reigned.

Led by his never-failing guide, Joseph went farther north into Galilee, and there made the city of Nazareth holy ground. Joseph and Mary little dreamed that the humble city which was their refuge should be a sacred shrine to which thousands of pilgrims should come in the future years.

And in the lowly home of Joseph the carpenter, the child grew "strong in spirit and in wisdom."

He was the Son of God—the King of kings; yet He gave a perfect example of how a child



CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.

should live. Every little child has a perfect pattern in His life.

When at twelve years of age He went up with His parents to Jerusalem, He found more pleasure in the temple, hearing the learned doctors, than anywhere else; and His parents had gone a day's journey on their return home when they missed Him. They went back to the city, and sought three days before they found Him.

Then they went into the temple, and there the boy sat among the learned doctors, "both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and His answers."

Mary, like any mother, said to Him, —

"Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." He answered her, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Yet He obediently returned to Nazareth with them, and "was subject unto them."

The commandment, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord," He kept truly, and "increased

in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

By His own perfect example He taught obedience to the command of God.

QUESTIONS.

Who was the king of Grecia?

What priest met him as he came to destroy Jerusalem?

Did he spare the city?

What nations had ravaged the country?

For whom were the people anxiously waiting?

How did they think He would come?

Did the Messiah come in the way the people expected?

Was King Herod a friend to the new-born King?

What did he bid the wise men to do?

Did they obey?

Why not?

Whom did the shepherds who were watching their flocks by night see?

What song did the angels sing ?

What did Simeon say when he saw the child ?

What did Anna do ?

Where was the first year of the Saviour's life spent ?

Who warned them of Herod's plot to take the child's life ?

Did the foolish king gain anything fighting against God ?

After his death, where did the holy family go ?

What was Joseph's occupation ?

Was the Saviour a dutiful child ?

Where did His parents find Him when they took Him to Jerusalem at twelve years of age ?

Did He return to Nazareth with them ?

What commandment did He observe ?

CHAPTER II.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

ALMOST thirty years of the life of Jesus had passed by, when a strange man roughly clad came through the wilderness of Judea preaching, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

His coming had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah more than seven hundred years before; and the people had read about him in the Scriptures, which they devoutly revered and believed.

He wore a garment of camel's hair fastened by a leather girdle, and "did eat locusts and wild honey." His father was the aged priest Zechariah; and his mother, Elisabeth, also a daughter of Aaron, was cousin to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

John was six months older than Jesus, whom he had never met. Did he fully realize the truth, when he said, "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose"?

Great multitudes from the cities followed him and heard him cry in the very words of the prophet uttered so long ago, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Jesus himself, though He did not need to repent, though He was Himself "the Lord," came from Nazareth to John, who was at the Jordan, to be baptized by him.

When the prophet saw Jesus coming he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John shrunk at first from baptizing the holy Jesus. He said, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

As Jesus came up from His baptism, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God like a dove rested on Him. Then came a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The next day John and two of his disciples saw Jesus, and John said, "Behold the Lamb of

God." The two disciples followed Jesus. He turned and asked them, "What seek ye?"

"Master, where dwellest thou?" they answered; and he said, "Come and see." They went with him and remained that day. They had begun to learn the truth from the prophet John, and hungered for more.

The name of one was Andrew. He went after his brother Simon, and told him, "We have found the Christ." When Jesus saw Simon Peter, he said, "Thou shalt be called Cephas" — "a stone."

The Lord Jesus knew all about what Peter would do, how, though one of his chosen twelve, he would deny him, and that he would bitterly repent, and serve him faithfully, and at last die for him.

Andrew did just what every lover of Christ does at this day. When he had found Jesus, he *wished to bring his friends to Him*. The voice of God from heaven at His baptism must have convinced all who heard that He was the Son of God — the Messiah whom all were looking for; and

John, who had so many disciples, had said plainly that He was "the Lamb of God." He said, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

When all looked so clear, the terrible temptation, when for forty days and forty nights the evil spirit tempted the Saviour, came. Though He was truly God, He was also man, and would show men by his own example how to overcome temptation.

After the forty days, He was hungry like any other man, and the devil told Him, what he already knew, that He could turn the stones into bread. But He answered, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Thousands have been slain by appetite, but Jesus thus taught that the bread of life was more to be desired than earthly food.

Then from the pinnacle of the temple He was tempted to cast himself down; for was it not written, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee;" but Jesus rebuked the sin of presumption. He said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" was written also.

Then ambition was brought in seductive colors before the weary God-man, ambition which should in after years rob millions of the glories and joys of heaven. "All the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," were spread before Him. He had only to fall down and worship the prince of darkness. But Jesus said, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Then Satan left Him, "and angels came and ministered unto Him."

Jesus heard that the wicked Herod had cast John into prison, and went northward into Galilee. His public ministry was now begun, and He avoided scenes of danger, though all power was His.

He saw Andrew and Simon Peter casting a net into the sea of Galilee, and said to them, —

"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." The Christ had called them, and they came without a word of questioning.

As they went on, two brothers, James and John, were mending nets, with Zebedee, their father, by the sea, and He said, —

“Follow me,” and they obeyed.

These poor fishermen little dreamed that thousands of years later their names would be illustrious, and their simple obedience be admired and copied all over the world.

Galilee, which had long sat in darkness, rejoiced in the first ministrations of the Light of the world. He taught in their synagogues; He preached the glorious gospel; He healed “all manner of disease” among them.

It is no wonder that “His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them.”

“He came unto His own, and His own received him not;” yet in far away Galilee all were rejoicing in Him, and even the Syrians, the ancient enemies of Israel, were coming to Him with all their wants and woes. “And He healed them.”

The crowds which followed this wonderful man wearied Him, there was so much sorrow and suf-

fering among them ; but He never questioned them, or turned away from the vilest among them. Even the leper, with his incurable, loathsome disease, who cried, —

“ Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,” heard the “ I will ; be thou clean,” and was healed.

Yet Jesus *must* have rest. He turned from the multitudes, and went up into a mountain.

Here his disciples found Him, and He preached to them the most wonderful sermon that the world has ever known.

QUESTIONS.

How old was Jesus when the prophet came to the wilderness of Judea, crying, “ Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ? ”

What prophet foretold His coming ?

Who were his father and mother ? and what was his name ?

How much older than Jesus was he ?

For what did Jesus come to John at the Jordan ?

What did John say ?

What answer did Jesus make

What wonderful thing happened when Jesus came up out of the water ?

Who followed Jesus to see where He dwelt ?

What did He say to Simon Peter ?

When Peter had found Jesus, what did He do ?

How many days and nights did Christ's temptation last ?

What did He teach by this ?

After Satan left the Saviour, who came to Him ?

What did Jesus do when He heard that John had been cast into prison ?

What disciples were first called ?

Where did Jesus first teach ?

Did He do great miracles ?

Did all the people welcome Him ?

Did He heal all who came to Him ?

CHAPTER III.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

AMONG the millions of sermons which have been preached, there is only one perfect model; and among the countless prayers ascending to heaven, there is only one perfect prayer. Jesus Christ gave us both of these.

The sermon was entirely different from anything the disciples had ever heard before, so contrary to the teaching and promptings of their sinful hearts. He gave them first what are called the Beatitudes.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,” and “they that mourn,” and “the meek,” and “they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness,” and “the merciful,” and “the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” and “the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” To every one of these was given a beautiful promise.

But the strangest words followed, “Blessed are



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

ye that are persecuted for righteousness' sake," and "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." Strange teaching this, the few who heard this wonderful sermon first, doubtless thought.

Then He told them to "rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." The prophets before them had suffered thus, and they were now reaping their reward.

He told them, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and, "Ye are the light of the world," and bade them let their light shine, that men might glorify the Father in heaven.

Finally He told them to, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you. That ye may be children of your father which is in heaven."

Is not this the great reward? To become children of God! The steps, though not easy, surely lead to Him.

The whole sermon, though not so long as men

preach in these days, is brimming over with truths which will make any life pure and beautiful.

The prayer which the Lord Jesus taught His disciples is perhaps even more wonderful than the sermon. If one can say it *from the heart, he is surely a child of God.*

Every want is expressed to God the Father, whose fulness of love must dwell in the soul which prays, "Forgive us our trespasses *as* we forgive them who trespass against us," and the highest longing of the heart finds voice in the words, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

When Jesus came down from the mountain, where He had been teaching these precious lessons, great multitudes followed Him. This made the scribes and Pharisees hate Him, but the Saviour was careful to avoid giving them any cause for their cruel conduct. He bade the leper whom he healed to "tell no man," to "show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded."

When he entered Capernaum, a centurion met

him, and asked him to heal his servant who was sick of the palsy. Jesus answered, "I will come and heal him."

"I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," the officer said, "but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

"I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," the Saviour said to him.

"Go thy way; and as thou hast believed so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour."

When Jesus came into Peter's house, He found the mother sick of a fever. One touch from His hand, and the fever left her.

It was evening, and still they crowded around Him, bringing the sick, and those who were possessed of devils, and He healed them all. The prophet Isaiah had written, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." But He was very weary, and told His disciples, that as the crowds still came, they would go to the other side of the sea.

A scribe said to him, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

“The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests,” he answered; “but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” Jesus did not want any disciples to follow Him for worldly glory, but only those who could bear the hardships He bore, and who followed Him for love of Him.

In the ship, so utterly wearied was he, that he fell asleep. A fierce storm came down upon them, and the frail vessel was tossed on the angry waves, yet still he slept on. At last the trembling disciples awoke him with, —

“Lord, save us: we perish.”

“Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” he said. He arose, and rebuked the winds, and there was a great calm. Truly they need not fear, when the God of the earth and sea was with them.

On the other side they met two men possessed of devils, so fierce that “no man might pass that way.” They knew the Son of God, and cried out, —

“What have we to do with thee? . . . art thou come hither to torment us before the time?”

Jesus cast out the devils, and they were permitted to enter a herd of swine, which “ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.”

The men of the city, when they heard all these things, “besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts.” It is strange, indeed, that men should pray their best Friend to depart; but some have done it always, and many are doing the same thing to-day. But the Saviour left them as they prayed Him to do, and crossed the sea again, and came into his own city. Here He healed the sick still, and here ate with publicans and sinners. He said, —

“They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”

The ruler whose loved daughter was dead, came to Him and told Him that if He would only lay his hand upon her she should live. While He was on His way to the ruler’s house, a woman who had been sick for twelve years came and just touched the hem of his garment, and was made whole.

When He reached the ruler's house, the minstrels and the people were making a great noise. He said, —

“Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.” When these strange mourners had been sent away, Jesus took the dead girl's hand, and she arose.

The great Teacher who brought the dead to life, who gave the blind their sight, who cast out devils, who cleansed the lepers, and healed the palsied, must be God. Only He could do all these things. And there were so many sick and sorrowful ones, so many who needed His healing touch, that they thronged about Him.

He loved and pitied them. Yet God uses human hands in His great harvest field. Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”

QUESTIONS.

What was the greatest sermon ever preached ?

Were its teachings like anything ever before heard ?”

What is the great reward ?

What prayer expresses every want of the human soul ?

Did Jesus heal the multitudes ?

What had the prophet Isaiah written concerning Him ?

What did the disciples cry when the ship was tossed in the tempest ?

What did Jesus do ?

What other great miracles did He do ?

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWELVE DISCIPLES.

FROM among the thousands who followed the Saviour, He chose twelve who are known as His chosen disciples. Besides Andrew, Simon, James, and John, who were first called, there were Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, another James and Lebbæus, another Simon, and Judas Iscariot. Some of these we have learned to know very well.

Jesus gave them power to cast out evil spirits, and to heal all manner of disease and sickness.

He bade them to go first to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

He told them He sent them forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves," for He knew all they must suffer for his sake. He told them "freely ye have received, freely give."

If they persecuted them in one city they must flee to another. The disciple was not above his Lord, and that even the hairs of their head were numbered. Their Father would care for them, and, though they must suffer persecution for His sake, whosoever should give them a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, should not lose his reward.

He told them that “whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.”

When John the Baptist, whom Herod had cast into prison, heard of the great miracles which Jesus wrought, he sent two of his disciples to Him with the question, —

“Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?”

Jesus told them to go and tell John that “the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to

them." This doubtless made John very happy, though he was a prisoner.

Soon after this he went from his prison to his throne in heaven. The wicked Herodias, who was much worse than Herod, her husband, and who was the means of John's being cast into prison, was determined that he should die. The good man had rebuked her sin, and she hated him.

Salome, her beautiful daughter, danced before the king; and he, foolish from drinking wine, promised her whatever she should ask, "even to the half of his kingdom." The cruel maid, instructed by her wicked mother, said, "Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger."

The king, who was not utterly bad, and knew that John was a good man, was sorry; but coward as he was, he sent to the prison, and John was beheaded, and the gray head was given to Salome, making her shame immortal.

But remorse, the worm that never dies, was now Herod's portion. He heard of the fame of Jesus, and said to his servants, —

"This is John the Baptist; he is risen from



FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.”

Jesus, when He heard of the death of John, did not stay to meet the danger. He went away in a ship and came to a desert shore; but the people from all the cities followed Him.

The One who spake such gracious words, who healed the sick and raised the dead, could not be hid. Evening came, and the great multitude still tarried. His disciples said to Him, —

“This is a desert place, and the time is past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.”

Jesus answered, —

“They need not depart; give ye them to eat.”

“We have here but five loaves and two fishes,” they said.

“Bring them hither to me,” said the Master.

He bade the multitude to sit down on the grass. He took the loaves and fishes and blessed them. Then He brake, and gave them to His disciples, and they to the people; and five thousand men, besides women and children, were fed.

He would not turn the stones to bread when *He* was so hungry; but when He saw the great multitude faint and hungry, He did this miracle.

Now He told His disciples to go into a ship, and sail for the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. He went up into a mountain to pray, and was there alone. The ship, tossed by the winds and waves, was in the midst of the sea, when the disciples saw Jesus coming to them, walking on the sea.

They had seen Him do greater works than this, yet they were afraid. They said, —

“It is a spirit,” and cried out in fear. Over the tossing billows came His loved voice, —

“Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.”

Peter joyfully cried out, —

“Bid me come to thee on the water.”

“Come,” the Master said, and Peter walked on the water safely till he looked away from Jesus. The great waves were so frightful that he was afraid. Then he began to sink, and cried out in terror, “Lord, save me.” Jesus put forth His hand and caught him.

“O thou of little faith,” He said, “wherefore didst thou doubt?” Then they both came into the ship, and the wind ceased.

Those in the ship said, “Thou art the Son of God,” and they worshipped Him. Still the crowds thronged about Him when He reached the other shore, friends and foes; and still He healed them all, even the most degraded.

Again He fed the multitude, four thousand men, besides women and children, with only seven loaves and a few small fishes; and seven baskets of fragments remained.

But the time was drawing near when this life, so full of good deeds, must close. He told His disciples that He should be betrayed, that He should be killed, and that the third day He should rise again. They could not have understood this, for soon after they were asking Him who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus called a little child to Him and said that, unless they were converted, and became as little children, they could not *enter* the kingdom of heaven. Humility was a very hard lesson for even the lovers of Jesus to learn.

It is not possible in this little volume to even mention the many miracles which Jesus did. They are all recorded in the Book.

If these short stories shall lead any to study the *Bible*, they will find great treasures.

When Jesus came into Jerusalem this last time, it was another prophecy fulfilled, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

And the multitudes spread all the way with their garments and palm branches, and cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." He went at once to the temple and "cast out all them that sold and bought, . . . and overthrew the tables of the money changers." He said, —

"It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

"The blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them." And the little

children cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Jesus was always kind and loving to the children. At one time, when the mothers brought them to Him for His blessing, the disciples would have turned them away. But the Master was displeased with them.

He took the little ones in His arms and blessed them.

He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

Is not this a royal invitation? For every little child may belong to the kingdom of God, *if he will*. Yet children as well as grown people must *choose* the dear Saviour as their Master, if they hope to live with Him forever in heaven.

QUESTIONS.

How many from among the multitude which followed Him did Jesus choose as disciples?

What were their names?

To whom did Jesus bid them to go first?

Did He warn them what they must suffer for His sake ?

What did He say of those who should confess Him ?

Of those who should deny Him ?

What did Herod do to John the Baptist ?

What wicked woman determined that he should die ?

How did Salome accomplish this ?

What was Herod's portion ?

After John's death, where did Jesus go ?

How did He feed the multitude which followed Him ?

Did He do this miracle more than once ?

How did He come to His disciples in the ship ?

Did they know Him ?

What did He say to them ?

Who tried to go to Him on the water ?

What made him begin to sink ?

When Jesus helped him what did He say to him ?

Safe in the ship, what did the disciples do ?

Did Jesus tell His disciples that He should be betrayed ?

Did they understand Him ?

What did He do when asked who should be
greatest in the kingdom of heaven ?

What lesson is so hard to learn ?

When Jesus came into Jerusalem the last time,
what prophecy was fulfilled ?

What did the little children cry ?

Did Jesus love the children ?

What precious promise did He give them ?

CHAPTER V.

THE MASTER IS BETRAYED.

AMBITION is a hateful sin, and it is sad to see it, even among Christ's chosen ones. But there is a sin more deadly, and it creeps into the hearts of God's children even down to this day.

Judas Iscariot saw the beautiful, loving, holy Christ every day. And we believe he loved Him. But he loved something else better.

He was the *treasurer*. He "carried the bag;" and at one time, when an alabaster box of precious ointment was poured upon the Saviour's head, he grumbled, and called it "waste." Oh, how he loved money! better than his Master, better than his own soul, better than his hopes of heaven. For he sold them all for money.

The saddest story ever written is that of the betrayal and shameful death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He told His disciples at the last supper that one of them should betray Him. They all asked, "Is it I?" yet Judas went out from this very supper and sold Him to His enemies for thirty pieces of silver.

Peter was so sanguine, that he said, —

"Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee." For Jesus had told him that he would deny Him thrice that very night. Alas! we do not know ourselves. All the disciples said the same as Peter.

He went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane. He was bowed down by a weight of sorrow such as we can never know. The agony of the cruel death which He knew was so near was not the worst. He bore the sins of the whole world on His pure, loving heart.

He took Peter and James and John, and went farther on. He told them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and went by Himself and prayed. In His agony great sweat-drops of blood fell to the ground. And an angel came and strengthened Him, but *His disciples slept*. He

said to Peter, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Again He went away and prayed, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done." And the second time He found them asleep. Was it *grief* which overcame them?

Jesus was very pitiful, and the third time He left them and prayed the same prayer. Then He came to them and said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

They were awake now, and He told them that His betrayer was near. A great multitude here came into the garden, led by the traitor Judas. This wretched man said, "Hail, Master, and kissed him."

Jesus did not resist when they laid hands on Him; but Peter drew his sword, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. Jesus rebuked Peter. He said, "Put up thy sword: . . . they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." He told them that if He should

ask, the Father would give Him "twelve legions of angels." And He healed the man by a touch.

Then we read the sad story, "*all the disciples forsook him and fled.*" They led the Saviour away to the high priest, and "Peter followed him afar off." He could fight better than he could watch and pray. His accusers could find nothing against Jesus, yet Peter three times denied that he knew Him. Jesus *looked* upon Peter, and "he went out and wept bitterly."

In the morning, when Judas Iscariot saw what he had done, he came to the priests and brought back the money. He said, —

"I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."

"What is that to us? See thou to that," they answered. And "he went out and hanged himself."

Pontius Pilate, the governor, had a great deal of trouble with the innocent prisoner. He could not find anything against Him, and the Jews were *determined* that He must die.

When he was seated on the judgment seat, his

wife sent a messenger to him, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." Pilate was faithfully warned, but he was a coward. He said, "I find no fault in him." He washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it;" and then — "he delivered him to be crucified."

Is it strange that Pilate, the Roman *governor*, and Judas Iscariot, the betrayer, stand side by side on the roll of infamy?

They put a scarlet robe upon Him; they platted a crown of thorns, and placed it on the head of Jesus; they placed a reed in His hand, and bowed before Him in mockery, saying, —

"Hail, King of the Jews." Then they stripped His garments from Him, and smote Him on the head with the reed. They spit upon Him, and led Him away to be crucified. They nailed Him to the cross, and placed the inscription over Him, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

He could have had "more than twelve legions of

angels" if He had called for them; but He hung there by His bleeding, mangled hands and feet, and even in His awful agony he said to the penitent thief beside Him, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The sun refused to shine. Three hours there was darkness over the land; and when the soul of Jesus left the agonized body, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many.

"Now when the centurion and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

Many women watched the awful scene; and a rich man, Joseph, went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. He wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb.

Those who crucified Him remembered that He said He would rise again, and went to Pilate and

begged that the sepulchre should be made sure till the third day, and that a watch should be set. Pilate said, "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." So the Roman seal was placed on the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre. It was death for any man to break this seal.

They placed a guard of soldiers around the tomb. If any one of these should sleep at his post, the penalty would be death. So they had, as they thought, *made it sure*. Their rage was satisfied.

QUESTIONS.

Did Judas Iscariot love Jesus?

What did he love more?

What was his office among the disciples?

What did he say when Mary poured the precious ointment upon the Saviour's head?

What did Jesus say at the last supper?

What did they ask?

Where did Judas go from this supper?

- For how much did he sell his Master ?
What did Peter declare ?
What did all the disciples say ?
Where did Jesus and His disciples now go ?
What heavy load did Jesus bear ?
Whom did He take as He went farther on ?
What did He say to them ?
In His agony, what happened ?
Who came to Him ?
What did His disciples do ?
What did He say to them ?
What was Jesus' prayer ?
Did He find them again asleep ?
What did He say when He came to them the
third time ?
Who came into the garden ?
Who led them ?
What did Judas do ?
Who drew his sword ?
What did Jesus say to Peter ?
What did He tell them the Father would give
Him if He should ask ?
Did He heal the man ?

What sad story do we next read ?

How did Peter follow Him ?

How many times did he deny Him ?

When Jesus looked upon Peter, what did he do ?

When Judas saw his Master a prisoner, what did he do ?

Did the priests take back the money ?

What did they say to him ?

What did he then do ?

Was Pilate, the governor, a brave man ?

Did his wife warn him ?

What did he say of Jesus ?

How did he try to wash away his sin in condemning him ?

What two men stand side by side on the roll of infamy ?

What did they do with the holy and innocent Jesus ?

What did Jesus say to the penitent thief who hung beside him ?

When Jesus died on the cross, what strange things occurred ?

What did the centurion say ?

What rich man begged the body of Jesus ?

What did those who crucified Him remember ?

What precaution did they take ?

What was the penalty for breaking the Roman seal ?

What for sleeping at the post ?

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESURRECTION.

VERY early in the morning of the first day of the week, the day which should ever after be hallowed as the Christian Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" came to the sepulchre. On the way they had thought of the great stone at the door of the sepulchre.

"Who shall roll us away the stone?" they had queried; for they had brought sweet spices to anoint the loved body.

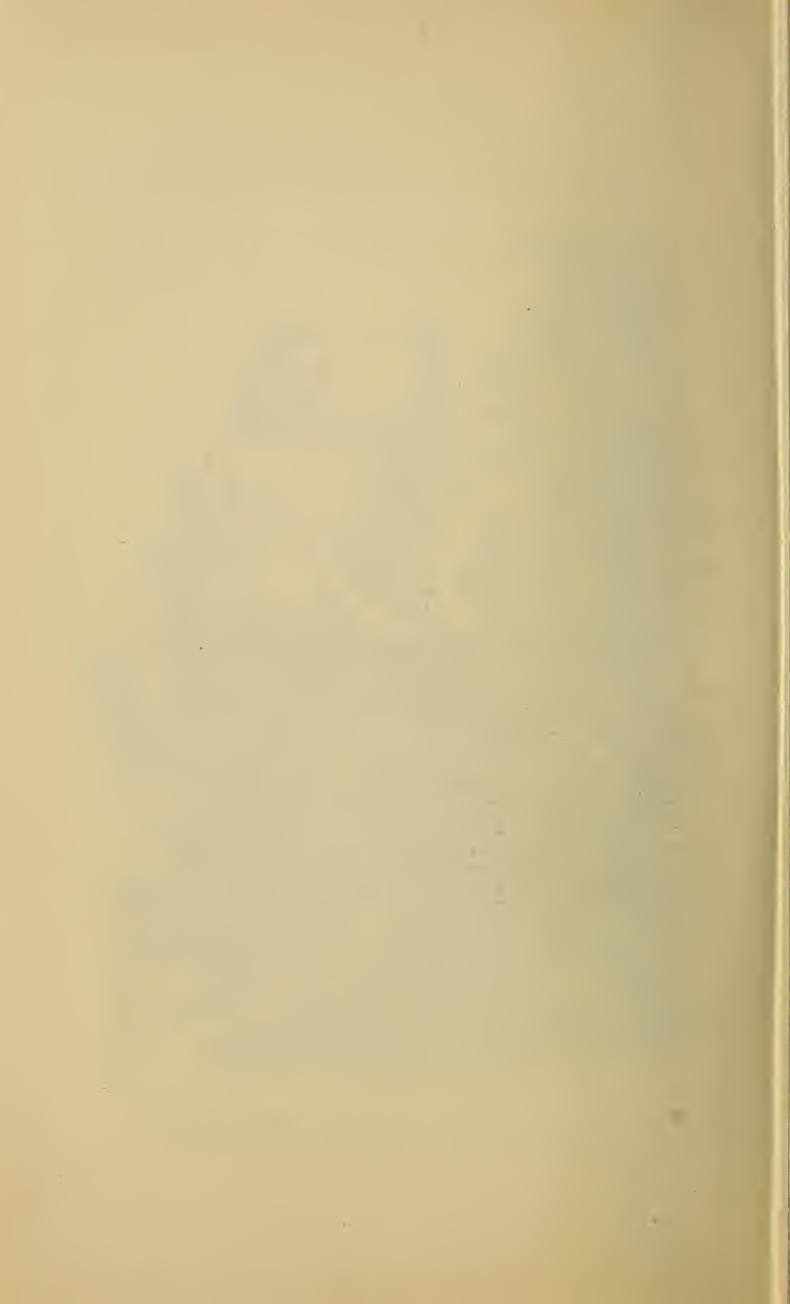
"There was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." The soldiers had fallen like dead men.

The angel told the women that the Lord had risen; and the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to Mary, and said, "Be not afraid."

He bade her tell His disciples the glad news,



THE SAVIOUR APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE.



and that they should go into Galilee, where He would meet them. Trembling, yet elate, the first gospel messenger bore the glad news to the disciples whom Jesus loved. And the watch, which had failed so entirely, carried the news to the chief priests who had employed them.

These men bade the soldiers say that "His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept." *They* would manage matters with the governor, should he hear of it. The soldiers took the money which the priests offered, and told the lie which they bade them tell, and *those who wished to* believed it.

But the disciples were filled with gladness. There were eleven of them now. They went to Galilee, as Jesus had bidden them, to a mountain where He had appointed. And the risen Saviour met them there, and they worshipped Him, "but some doubted."

Forty days after His crucifixion He remained on earth, coming to His disciples when the doors were all shut. He showed them His hands and His feet, He taught them the blessed gospel, He

walked with them, He talked with them, He ate with them.

Ten different times are recorded when He appeared to them, at one time when five hundred saw Him. No fact was ever better proven; and that Christ is risen, gives the whole world hope of eternal life.

Time is computed from the fact that the Son of God came to the world which He had made; and "in the year of our Lord," and "Before Christ," are the data for all events which have occurred.

Christ had bidden His disciples to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," to heal the sick, to cast out devils, to do the works they had seen Him do; and He had said, —

"Greater works shall ye do, because I go unto my Father." Was not this a great promise? He had told them that it was better for them that He should go away, for He would send them the Comforter, who would *lead them into all truth*.

He told them that "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," and that "ye shall

receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Then "he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

As the disciples gazed upward, two men in white stood by them. They said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

QUESTIONS.

Since Christ, what day has been recognized as the Christian Sabbath?

Who came to the sepulchre on that day?

What questions had troubled them on the way?

Who had rolled away the stone?

Where were the soldiers?

What did the angel tell the women?

Who spoke to Mary Magdalene?

What message did He send to His disciples?

What did the baffled soldiers do ?

What lie did the priests bid the soldiers tell ?

Where did Jesus first appear to His eleven disciples ?

How many days did He remain on earth ?

How many times did He appear to His disciples ?

How many persons saw Him at one time ?

What is it which gives to the world hope of eternal life ?

From what date is time computed ?

What did Christ say that His disciples should do ?

When He told them that it was better for them that He should go away, who did He say He would send to them ?

How should they be baptized "not many days hence" ?

What should they receive ?

What then occurred ?

As the disciples stood gazing into heaven, what did the two men in white say to them ?

CHAPTER VII.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

FROM the Mount of Olivet, where they had seen the Lord Jesus ascend into heaven, the disciples came back, "a sabbath day's journey," to Jerusalem.

Here they "went up into an upper room" to "wait for the promise of the Father," as Jesus had bidden them.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there, and the women, and *the entire church of Christ*. They numbered only one hundred and twenty, but they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Matthias was chosen in place of the traitor Judas as one of the twelve.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Then came the great event for which they had been praying so many days. "A sound from

heaven as of a rushing mighty wind filled all the house," and "cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them." "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." They began to speak in various languages *as He taught them.*

Jerusalem was filled with devout men from all parts of the world. These, hearing the news, came to the place to hear in their own language the unlearned Galileans "tell of the wonderful works of God." They were filled with wonder; and Peter told them that this was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel. The Holy Spirit had come. It had fallen on the servants and handmaidens of God.

Then he preached Christ and His resurrection with great power. He bade them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Three thousand people heeded the call on that day. They were baptized, and joined the army of Christ. They "sold their possessions," and gave to all who were needy, "continuing daily with one

accord in the temple, . . . praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

We do not wonder at this, for the people who served Christ were so full of joy and gladness. "The joy of the Lord is your strength," the Bible says.

Then, they were so tender-hearted, caring for the needy. They loved each other so, and love is wonderfully attractive. "See how these Christians love" brings more people into the church of God than the most powerful arguments. "Praising God" was another of their characteristics. It is good to praise the Lord, and to *know* the blessed Comforter.

QUESTIONS.

Where did the disciples go from Olivet?

How many were gathered in the upper room?
and for what were they praying?

Who was chosen in place of the traitor Judas?

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, what occurred ?

What effect did this have on the people of all nations who were in Jerusalem ?

What did Peter tell them ?

How many were converted that day ?

Were more added to the number daily ?

What is the strength of the Christian ?

What wins more than argument ?

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME OF THE DISCIPLES.

IT is hard to recognize in Peter, after he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the fiery, impetuous, *cowardly* man, who, on the night when his Lord stood before his enemies, *denied Him with an oath*. Jesus had loved him so; he was one of the first chosen; he had stood with James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, and seen the glory of the Lord. He had seen Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus, and had cried, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us build here three tabernacles," and had heard the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." Yet only forty days ago he had *denied Him* thrice.

Now all is changed. While the people were all wondering at the scenes of the day of Pentecost, he boldly stood up and declared that this was only the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. He told the

Jews who had crucified Jesus, that he had risen, and now, seated at the right hand of the Father, "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

He went with John to the temple. At the gate he saw a lame man, who asked for alms. Peter answered, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk." He took his hand and lifted him up; and leaping and praising God, the man who had been lame entered into the temple with them. The crowds came around, and Peter told them of Jesus and his resurrection. He said that "his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know."

With this notable miracle before them, with the burning words of Peter and John sounding in their ears, the scribes and Pharisees were almost powerless. Five thousand more turned to God. Then Peter and John were arrested, and held in prison till the next day. They were threatened, and commanded not to speak at all in the name of

Jesus. "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than God, judge ye," they answered. The priests were afraid of the people, so they threatened them again, and let them go.

When they came again to their own company, they prayed together for power to withstand their enemies, and to do the work of God. Again "the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

After this we see no more vacillation in Peter. Multitudes were added to the church; and so great was his power, that the sick were brought into the streets that his shadow might fall on them. He healed all the sick, and the high priest was so angry that he thrust all the apostles into the common prison.

That night the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out. He told them to go and teach in the temple. When the high priest sent for the prisoners in the morning, the

officers found the prison doors closed, and the keepers standing before them, but — *the prison was empty*. Then one came and told them that the men whom they sought were in the temple teaching the people. They were amazed. They sent for the apostles, and asked them why their commands were not obeyed. Peter answered boldly, —

“We ought to obey God rather than man,” and spoke the truth so fearlessly that they were filled with rage. They sent the men out, and “took counsel to slay them.” But one of the council said, —

“Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” They listened to this sound advice; and when they had beaten the men, and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus, they let them go.

They went forth, “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”

Still they taught daily in the temple, and in every house preached Jesus Christ.

The number of believers became so great that the priests were alarmed, and persecution arose. The holy Stephen was stoned to death, praying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." A young man, Saul, of whom we learn more later, was among the persecutors. The disciples were scattered, and went everywhere preaching the Word. The life of Peter was long; and he did many great miracles, even calling the dead Dorcas back to life.

He was the first one who preached the gospel to the Gentiles. He was again set free from prison by an angel of the Lord. After a long and glorious career, it is said that, under the cruel Nero, he was, with the great apostle Paul, thrown into the Mamertine prison at Rome. Here he was confined eight or nine months; and then, when the emperor Nero came back to Rome, he received the crown of martyrdom.

He was crucified like his Master; yet so great was his sorrow for his sin in denying Him, that he

begged to be permitted *to be crucified with his head downward*. This was granted. One of the grandest churches in the world, St. Peter's, was erected in his honor.

QUESTIONS.

After Peter had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, was he a changed man ?

Was he brave now ?

How many more turned to God ?

What did the priests do to Peter and John ?

What did the disciples answer them ?

When they came again to their own company, what occurred ?

Did Peter do great miracles ?

What did the angry high priest do ?

Who opened the prison doors ?

When the priests sent to an empty prison the next morning, how did they feel ?

What answer did Peter make when questioned ?

What sound advice did one of the council give ?

What then did the priests do ?

Why did the apostles rejoice ?

Who was the first martyr ?

What noted man was among the persecutors ?

What effect did persecution have ?

What cruel emperor threw Peter into prison with Paul, the great apostle ?

How long was he imprisoned ? and how did he die ?

What was his request as to the manner of his crucifixion ?

CHAPTER IX.

JOHN.

JOHN, "the beloved disciple," the companion of Peter through the glorious season of Pentecost, was one of the first whom Jesus called to be His followers. He wrote five of the most beautiful books of the Bible. He rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer for his Master.

The Emperor Domitian, when he banished him to the lonely Isle of Patmos, meant to punish him for his religion. If, instead of this, he had placed him on the throne of the Cæsars, he could not have done him so great an honor. For on Patmos the great God met him. He "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," and heard "a great voice as of a trumpet." The voice said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. What thou seest, write in a book." The glorious Being whom John saw, and the words which he heard,

are written in that grand and mysterious book, Revelation, the last book in the Bible, but the first which the great apostle wrote.

This same cruel Domitian had, before this, ordered him to be thrown into a caldron of boiling oil. One greater than the Roman emperor preserved him from harm, and his banishment to Patmos followed. Then the death of Domitian, and the succession of Nerva, a wiser and better emperor, opened the way for John's return to his beloved Ephesus, where he was bishop for many years.

He was many years younger than any of the other apostles; yet when, after the Saviour had risen, the provinces were divided among the apostles, Asia had fallen to his share. He did not at once enter upon his work. His loved Master had, on the cross of agony, given to his charge his beloved mother; and for fifteen years John remained in Jerusalem, caring for her in her deep sorrow. When death released her he went at once to Asia, where he planted many churches, and until extreme old age, with the assistance of seven other

bishops, cared for the churches throughout Asia Minor.

When extreme age had so enfeebled him that he could no longer preach, he was constantly led, at every public meeting, to the church at Ephesus, where his one precept was, "Little children, love one another."

"Charity" — love — and humility were the very soul of all his teaching, though he was styled "a son of thunder." His three epistles breathe the same spirit. They were written after Revelation; and, lastly, after a general fast through all the Asiatic churches, and prayer for divine guidance, St. John's Gospel was written. He died at ninety-eight, and was buried near Ephesus, the only apostle who escaped martyrdom.

QUESTIONS.

How many books of the Bible did John, "the beloved disciple," write?

Why did the Emperor Domitian banish him to Patmos?

Who met him there ?

What grand book did he write there ?

How had Domitian shown his malice before this ?

Who preserved John from harm in the caldron of boiling oil ?

After the death of Domitian, where did John go ?

What division of the church was his especial care ?

Before coming to Ephesus, why did he remain in Jerusalem for fifteen years ?

How long did he remain at Ephesus after the death of Mary ?

What is the soul of John's teaching ?

What was he styled ?

What three books did he write after Revelation ?

Before writing his Gospel, what was ordered throughout all the Asiatic churches ?

How old was he when he died ?

Did he escape martyrdom ?

CHAPTER X.

SAUL, OR PAUL.

SAUL is the Hebrew, and Paul the Latin, name for a great and good man whose name is immortal, because he obeyed God. He was born in the rich and populous city of Tarsus, a Roman city, a free corporation, endowed with all the privileges of Rome. Yet he was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, and two years older than Jesus.

The citizens of Tarsus often sent their children to Jerusalem for education. Saul was one of these, and was trained by Gamaliel, a very eminent rabbi, who is now only remembered because he was Paul's teacher. The pupil was a diligent student, a rigid Pharisee, "blameless" according to the law, and hating the new sect, the followers of Jesus, with a devout religious hatred.

He thought that he was doing God service by persecuting them, by casting them into prison; and

when the holy Stephen, the first martyr, was stoned to death, he held the clothes of those who killed him. Did a ray of divine light pierce the heart of the fiery zealot when he looked upon the shining face of the sufferer, and heard his dying prayer, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"?

He was "exceeding mad" against the Christians; he "went into every house," and dragged men and women to prison. He begged the high priest to give him letters to the synagogues in Damascus, that he might bring men or women who believed in Jesus bound to Jerusalem. "Breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," Saul, on his journey, drew near to Damascus. Suddenly a light flamed about him, and he heard a voice, —

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He had fallen prostrate on the ground, yet he knew God's voice. He answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," the Lord said to him. The men who were with him heard the voice, but saw no man.

Trembling and astonished, Saul cried, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do," the Lord replied. Saul arose and opened his eyes, but he was blind. They led him into the city, to the house of a man named Judas, on a street called Straight. Millions have visited the city of Damascus, and the street called Straight, because for three days Saul lay here in his helpless blindness, tasting neither food nor drink.

Then the Lord spoke to a disciple called Ananias, and bade him go to Saul and put his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight, "for behold he prayeth." Ananias did what so many Christians do now, told the Lord what he already knew, what a cruel persecutor Saul was, and that his errand to Damascus was to bind believers. "Go thy way," the Lord answered; "for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

Ananias went to Saul, and placing his hands on him, said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou

camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." Something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see. He arose and was baptized, and then ate and was strengthened.

Now he was as valiant for Jesus as he had been against Him. The persecutor had become an earnest advocate; and so many believed, that the Jews whom he vanquished in argument that Christ was the Son of God, sought to kill him. He was let down in a basket by night, over the city wall, by the disciples. His enemies watched the gates night and day, but Paul reached Jerusalem in safety.

Alas! here all the believers feared him, until Barnabas told the wonderful story of his conversion. Then they welcomed him gladly. He was so successful in convincing the Hellenist Jews that Jesus was the Christ, that plots were laid to destroy him. Being warned of these by God, he went with Barnabas to Antioch, where he spent a year, winning many converts.

Antioch is famed for first naming the disciples,

before called Nazarenes, "Christians." The name is now honored all over the world. The Jews had always held that they alone were God's chosen people, that "salvation is of the Jews." Now he teaches them by his servants that "God is no respecter of persons," that in every nation they that fear God shall be accepted by him. The Jews were enraged at this doctrine, for Paul preached it boldly. But the Gentiles heard the gospel gladly.

To prove that he was a most eloquent and convincing speaker, one has but to read his epistles to the different churches. Though so rarely eloquent, and giving himself wholly to the work of the gospel, Paul supported himself by his trade, that of a tent-maker; for, he said, "I seek not yours, but you." It was the praiseworthy custom of the Jews, however wealthy, to see that their children each had a trade, and Paul's was that of a tent-maker.

The story of his travels and voyages, of his sufferings and triumphs, is the most thrilling of any on record; and through it all he rejoiced that he

was counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. On Mars Hill he astonished the cultured Athenians by declaring to them the "Unknown God," whom they ignorantly worshipped. He was fearless before rulers when brought before them. Listening to his clear logic and matchless eloquence, King Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Yet success did not elate him, neither did misfortune depress. He was worshipped as a god one day, and the next stoned until they thought him dead. Five times he received thirty-nine lashes — the extent permitted by Jewish law; three times he was beaten with rods; three times he was shipwrecked; he was often imprisoned; in perils numberless, even including "false brethren;" and "was caught up into paradise," where he heard "words which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

He wrought miracles; he brought back the dead to life; he was warmly loved and bitterly hated; yet "none of these things moved him." He bore upon his heart daily "the care of all the churches."

The secret of this wonderful life is this, — he said, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” He had no fear of death. It would be for him a joyful release. Yet he gladly lived to toil and suffer for Christ.

When at the last he was to suffer martyrdom, by the sentence of the wicked proconsul Ægenas, he walked to the place of execution with such a cheerful air that the people cried out that “a good and innocent man was unjustly condemned to die.” The cross on which he was to die was in the form of the letter X, and known as St. Andrew’s cross. When he drew near it, he said, “I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it, and adorned with his members, as with so many inestimable jewels. I therefore come joyfully and triumphing in it, that it may receive me as a disciple and follower of Him who once hung upon it, and be the means of carrying me safe to my Master, being the instrument on which He redeemed me.”

He was fastened to the cross, where he hung

two days, teaching and instructing the people. Constant effort was being made to the consul that his life might be spared ; but *he* was praying that he might now depart, and seal the truth with his blood. His prayers were heard, and he entered into rest.

A noble lady, Maximillia, wife of the pro-consul, gave the body honorable interment. Afterward the Emperor Constantine removed it to Constantinople, ‘and buried it in the great church which he had built to honor the apostles.’ His true monument, however, is the millions of “living epistles” saved by the truths he uttered in his varied epistles, which are the comfort and inspiration of the Christian world to-day. Truly the great apostle might say, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

QUESTIONS.

Where was Paul born ?

Was it a famous city ?

Why was he sent to Jerusalem ?

Who was his teacher ?

Why did he hate Christians so ?

Was he a great persecutor ?

Why did he ask the high priest to send him to
Damascus ?

What was his spirit ?

What did he hear on the way to Damascus ?

What strange thing occurred ?

What answer did he make to the voice ?

Did the men who were with him hear the voice ?

When Saul arose from the ground, what did he
find ?

Where was he led ?

Whom did the Lord send to him there ?

Was Saul's sight restored ?

Was he now valiant for Jesus ?

What did his enemies try to do ?

How did he escape ?

When he reached Jerusalem, did the believers receive him gladly ?

Who told them the wonderful story of his conversion ?

Where did he go with Barnabas ?

Where were the disciples first called Christians ?

Who first taught that "God is no respecter of persons" ?

Did this teaching please the Jews ?

Who received the Word gladly ?

What was Paul's occupation ?

Did he suffer for Christ ?

What did King Agrippa say to him ?

Mention some miracles which Paul wrought.

What was the secret of his wonderful life ?

Was he glad to die on the cross as his master did ?

What noble lady gave the body honorable interment ?

What great church did the Christian Emperor Constantine build in honor of apostles ?

What is Paul's true monument ?

CHAPTER XI.

ST. LUKE.

ANTIOCH, the capital of Syria, famed for its beautiful situation, its fertile soil, "the riches of its commerce, the wisdom of its senate, and the civility and politeness of its inhabitants," was the birthplace of Luke, "the beloved physician."

Antioch was famed for its schools of learning, and Luke was an artist as well as a physician. It is thought that he went to Rome with a noble family, as physician. He was a Jewish proselyte. Just when he became a Christian is not known. The fact that he was the constant companion of St. Paul, who speaks of him as the "brother whose praise is in the gospel," proves him a true disciple. The Gospel which he wrote, and the Acts of the Apostles, are elegantly and concisely expressed, and luminous with divine truth.

He was more than scholar, physician, and artist. He was one of Christ's witnesses. He is a "king and priest unto God."

After testifying and suffering for his sake, he laid down his life, one of the holy band of martyrs.

QUESTIONS.

Where was St. Luke born ?

Why did he go to Jerusalem ?

Was he a Jew ?

What great apostle did he accompany in his travels ? and how does he speak of him ?

What books of the Bible did he write ?

What was he more than scholar, physician, and artist ?

How did he die ?

CHAPTER XII.

TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY was one who, taught by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, had "from a child known the Holy Scriptures." He was Paul's own son in the gospel, and the great apostle loved him devotedly.

Two of the letters — epistles — which he wrote, are directed to Timothy. He bids him "be strong in the Lord," to "preach the Word," and tells him in his last letter, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Timothy went to his loved teacher by the gate of martyrdom.

QUESTIONS.

Who were Timothy's teachers in the Holy Scriptures ?

Who claims him as his own son in the gospel ?

How many of Paul's epistles are directed to him ?

What does he say in his last letter to him ?

How did Timothy die ?

CHAPTER XIII.

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

THE happiest and most honored woman the world ever saw was Mary, the mother of Jesus, who is "the light of the world."

The most sorrowful woman was this same Mary, when she saw the Son whom she so tenderly loved, the holy and perfect One, nailed to the cruel cross, when she saw the agonies he suffered, and knew that amid it all *she was remembered*.

By her side, his heart, like hers, rent with anguish, stood John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." From the dying Jesus came the words, "Woman, behold thy son;" and to John, "Behold thy mother." "And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." How tenderly he cared for the widowed mourner we may infer from the glimpses we get of his character in his Gospel and letters.



THE MADONNA.



And the few years in which his home was hallowed by her presence must have been happy ones for John. He did not worship her as he did her Son, though thousands of misguided people do this. He revered and loved her as his Master had done.

How rich in holy memories Mary's life must have been! The time when, a maiden on the Judean hills, the angel had said to her, "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women," seemed not so far away. Then the scenes of the Saviour's birth, the worship of the wise men, and the shepherds, to whom the angels had told the good news — "Peace on earth, good will to men."

She must have remembered the flight into Egypt at the angel's bidding, and the return after the cruel Herod had been called to answer for his crimes. How peaceful and love-sheltered had been the life of the Holy Child for whom she had cared! The scenes when He stood among the doctors in the temple, "both hearing them and asking them questions," at the wedding in Cana of Galilee,

where the first miracle was wrought, and at the river Jordan, where He commenced his great work, must have been ever before her.

The years closing with the awful tragedy of Calvary, when the holy and spotless One had died for the sins of the world, — how full they had been with deeds of mercy and of Divine power!

Blessed indeed were these memories; and very welcome, we believe, was the messenger sent to welcome her to His eternal home in whose “presence is fulness of joy,” and “pleasures forevermore.”

QUESTIONS.

Who was the happiest and the most sorrowful woman that the world has ever known?

When was she the most sorrowful?

What did Jesus say to her on the cross, as she stood beside John?

What did he say to John?

What did John do?

Did he care for her till her death ?

Did he worship her as he did her Son, his
Master ?

How did he regard her ?

What made Mary's life so happy and blessed ?





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